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Antarctica in children's literature

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Antarctica in Children's Literature

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ABSTRACT

For over a century, British authors have been writing about the Antarctic for child audiences, and yet Antarctic literature for children has never been considered as a unique body of work or given significant critical attention. This thesis represents the first in-depth examination of Antarctic literature for children written or published in Britain. Representations of the Antarctic hold particular relevance within the British context, as Britain retains significant territorial claims to Antarctic territories and British explorers have played a key role in Antarctic history. This thesis expands upon existing work focusing on literature for adults about the Antarctic including Francis Spufford's 1996 *I May be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* and Elizabeth Leane's 2012 *Antarctica in Fiction*.

Over a century of writing about the continent for children is interrogated, covering a period between 1895 and 2017. The thesis identifies, and provides a detailed examination of, the six dominant genres of literature about the Antarctic written for children. These genres are: whaling literature, "Heroic Era" exploration literature, subversive exploration literature, adventure literature, fantasy literature, and animal stories. This thesis focuses on representations of landscape within Antarctic literature for children, and draws on the work of landscape theorists and cultural geographers including Yi Fu Tuan, Roderick Nash, Greg Garrard and William Cronon to examine how authors for children have imagined the Antarctic as a wilderness. The thesis draws on, and adds to, existing examinations of landscape within children's literature, specifically Jane Suzanne Carroll's 2011 *Landscape in Children's Literature*. The thesis utilises Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of chronotopes to explore how time-space is constructed within Antarctic literature for children and the impact of time upon child and adult protagonists within the children's texts. Finally, the thesis examines representations of death and survival in Antarctic literature for children.

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Introduction

In November 1977, Silvia Morella de Palma was airlifted to the Argentinian Esperanza base on the Antarctic Peninsula. She was seven months pregnant. In January 1978 de Palma gave birth to a baby boy, Emilio Marcos Palma, the first baby born on the Antarctic continent. Emilio was the first, but not the last, child to be born in the Antarctic. To date, eight children have been born at Esperanza base, while three have been born at Chilean Antarctic bases (Walker, 2013, p.271). In an interview given in 2002, Emilio explained that his family stayed in Antarctica for only a brief period after his birth, as there were worries that the "sterile" environment would inhibit the normal development of antibodies ("An Argentine: Adam of the White Continent", 2002). However, other children have made a more permanent home in the continent. Unlike most research stations in the Antarctic, which explicitly forbid children under the age of eighteen, both the Argentinian and Chilean bases continue to allow child residents, primarily the offspring of army or air force officials operating at the bases. In 2013 journalists from the BBC travelled to the Chilean Antarctic base, Villa Las Estrellas, to interview a couple who were then living on the base with their infant son, Fernando. Towards the end of the video interview, parents Carolina and Fernando Sr. concede that, "Everyone asks us, why are you so mean as to take your child to the Antarctic?" ("Bringing up baby in Antarctica", 2013). Perhaps one reason the family is asked this pointed question so often is because, for hundreds of years, the Antarctic has been positioned as a hostile and deadly space; a landscape where men could complete astonishing acts of heroism and endurance, but a place utterly unsuitable for children.

Like Emilio, Fernando and his family play a symbolic role in the Antarctic, helping to bolster claims to contested space within the continent. Since land-based exploration began in the Antarctic at the turn of the twentieth century, many countries have laid claim to vast areas

of the continent: Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom all maintain territorial, and sometimes overlapping, claims in the Antarctic. Looking specifically at the Argentinian colonising efforts in the Antarctic, Klaus Dodds notes:

> When President Peron initiated the conquest and occupation of Argentine Antarctic Territory in the 1940s and 1950s, he used anti-colonial rhetoric to castigate the British for their prior occupation of the Antarctic Peninsula and the neighbouring Falkland Islands […] The Republic employed military men armed with surveys, maps, and flags in order to colonise Antarctica. (Dodds, 2006, p.61)

Emilio's birth was a continuation of this overtly imperialist approach to the Antarctic and a powerful symbol of Argentina's intentions to create a permanent base in the Antarctic, and of their commitment to their territorial claims.

More broadly, the birth of a baby in the Antarctic was symbolic of human progress in the continent. Long before human exploration began in the Antarctic interior, the continent had been depicted as an utter wilderness. In 1773, Captain James Cook led the first expedition to cross the Antarctic Circle. He described the Antarctic as a nightmarish wasteland and predicted that the landscape would remain unexplored:

> The risque one runs in exploring a coast, in these unknown and icy seas, is so very great, that I can be bold enough to say that no man will ever venture farther than I have done; and that the lands which may lie to the South will never be explored. Thick fogs, snow storms, intense cold and every other thing that can render navigation dangerous, must be encountered; and these difficulties are greatly heightened, by the inexpressibly horrid aspect of the country; a country doomed by Nature never once to feel the warmth of the sun's rays, but to lie buried in everlasting snow and ice. (as cited in Lewis, 2012, p.4)

Cook was proven wrong as subsequent expeditions[1] ventured further south to map and survey the Antarctic interior. For well over a century explorers attempted to overcome the seemingly considerable challenges in the Antarctic in order to bring the mysterious landscape into the 'known' world: from Fabian von Bellingshausen's expeditions in the 1820s, to Carsten Borchgrevink's *Southern Cross* expedition in the late 1890s, which was the first to 'overwinter' on the Antarctic mainland, through to the "Heroic Era" expeditions of the early twentieth century, led by (among others) Norwegian Roald Amundsen, and Britons Ernest Shackleton and Robert F. Scott. The records of these expeditions, too, often represented the Antarctic as an inimical wilderness. The ability to transform the landscape from a wilderness to a space capable of supporting new human life marked a further step in Antarctic colonisation. In the moment of his birth, Emilio unwittingly became part of a centuries-long drive to understand, explore and conquer the Antarctic wilderness.

While children such as Emilio have played important roles in Antarctic history, they have rarely featured as protagonists in Antarctic literature, even the stories produced for a child readership. Instead Antarctic literature for children has overwhelmingly focused on adult male characters, both real and fictional, and their heroic adventures in the icy continent. Throughout the twentieth century, the icy continent became a frequent setting for children's stories. For well over a century British authors have been creating stories for children set in the Antarctic. Some foundational Antarctic narratives have also crossed over into the children's canon such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798) which has long been considered suitable for child readers.

This thesis provides the first detailed analysis of Antarctic literature for children, including key themes, recurring tropes, and an interrogation of the depiction of the Antarctic

[1] Greater detail on polar exploration is available in histories such as *The Lands of Silence* (1921) by Clements Markham, former President of the Royal Geographical Society and ardent advocate for polar exploration.

as a landscape within these texts. The thesis also demonstrates the volume and breadth of this unexplored field of literature. In order to select the primary texts on which this thesis is based, it was first necessary to complete a detailed survey of the field. Research conducted at special collections such as the Scott Polar Institute in Cambridge, and the British Library brought to light texts which have received little or no critical attention, and which are interrogated for the first time within this thesis. The survey completed as part of this thesis resulted in a database of over 60 primary texts written or published in Britain (see Appendix 1). In compiling the corpus of texts upon which this thesis is based I sought to include as many and as varied a selection of texts possible. I included all texts which were identified as featuring the Antarctic as the (or a) primary landscape and which were written by a British author or published in Britain between 1895 and the present day. While not all texts receive equal critical attention, every effort has been made to include a broad and representative corpus of texts. Despite the fact that these texts have received little or no critical attention, I found the field to be varied, complex and worthy of significant analysis.

The thesis uses genre as an organisational framework. Analysis of the database created through the survey of primary material showed that there are six genres into which most of the children's literature about the Antarctic fall. The six genres identified through the analysis of the Antarctic literature database are: whaling literature; "Heroic Era" literature (non-fiction stories of exploration set in the early 20th century); subversions or revisions of "Heroic Era" narratives; adventure literature; fantasy literature; and animal stories. This categorisation of Antarctic literature for children both enables the genre-based analysis of writing about the continent for children undertaken in this thesis and facilitates future comparative analysis between children's and adult Antarctic literature. More broadly it enables an examination of dominant forms which literature for children about the Antarctic has taken as well as highlighting repeating themes and tropes throughout the literature and how these are shaped

by generic conventions. The most recent and comprehensive analysis of Antarctic literature, Elizabeth Leane's *Antarctica in Fiction* (2012) which looks primarily at adult literature, uses genre as its organisational framework and therefore the identification and analysis of dominant genres of Antarctic literature for children completed in the thesis could facilitate comparative research.

However, such a focus on genre is not without complications, because, as David Duff notes, "In modern literary theory, few concepts have proved more problematic and unstable than that of genre" (Duff, 2000, p.1), not least because genres are often difficult to define and texts can be understood as participating in several different genres. This is certainly true of the texts considered in this thesis, as the 'Heroic Era' texts could be understood as adventure literature, yet here they are analysed separately due to their focus on non-fiction adventure stories and prominent historical figures, while fantasy and adventure texts are examined together due to the notable similarities in plot and structure between many of the texts in these genres. Yet, I argue that the potential benefits that genre-based analysis offers warrants this approach. As Alison Waller notes, genre can be "a useful tool for noting significant trends in the field" (2009, p.11), and can elucidate what Todorov called the "relay points by which [a] work assumes a relation with the universe of literature" (1975, p.8). In this thesis the focus on genre demonstrates how specific tropes and themes have persisted across a century of writing about the continent, and how many of these tropes correspond to classic Antarctic literature produced by Edgar Allen Poe and Samuel Taylor Coleridge among others. This thesis does not attempt to provide rigid definitions of the genres identified, and seeks to highlight areas of continuity between genres, and the complexities of identifying genre in texts such as the fantastic adventure stories examined in Chapter Five of this thesis, in an attempt to ensure that genre is used as "an instrument not of classification or prescription, but of meaning" (Fowler, quoted in Waller, 2009, p.11).

The texts examined in this thesis offer a fascinating insight into how Antarctica has been understood and represented within British culture. Despite this, Antarctic children's literature never been considered as a unique body of literature and has been overlooked in cultural studies of the continent. Caroline Campbell's article "Between the Ice Floes: Imagining Gender, Fear and Safety in Antarctic Literature for Young Adults" (2012) focuses on just two texts from different national literatures, and so does not offer the longitudinal, or nationally specific analysis of Antarctic children's literature which this thesis provides. Yet, it is clear that the continent has generated strong critical interest. In his 1996 text, *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination*, Francis Spufford explored the relationship between Britain and the polar landscapes, looking at the history of British polar exploration, and the cultural production relating to the polar regions. Spufford argues that by 1850, "the poles were firmly established in the repertoire of improving subjects" and notes that Dickens' *Household Words* magazine "published thirteen substantial polar pieces of one kind or another during the magazine's lifetime" (1996, p.100). Spufford focuses on how ideas of the sublime shaped polar exploration and perceptions of polar landscapes (both Antarctic and Arctic), and provides an insight into the impact of the peripheral polar landscapes on the very centre of the British Empire, tracing how these far-flung polar landscapes helped to shape English identity. Elizabeth Leane's 2012 *Antarctica in Fiction* focuses specifically on the Antarctic and provides an in-depth examination of the variety of literature for adult readers that has been written about the Antarctic and how literature has helped to shape the cultural perception of the continent. Leane's text powerfully contradicts Stephen Pyne's assertion that "There has been no Antarctic school of literature" (Pyne, 2003, p.150). *Antarctica in Fiction* examines the dominant genres of Antarctic literature, including foundational texts such as Coleridge's 'Rime', and Edgar Allen Poe's *The Narrative of Gordon Arthur Pym of*

Nantucket (1838), as well as contemporary genres such as modern Antarctic science fiction, and romance.

However, while Leane considers a wide range of literature her text, like Spufford's, pays only scant attention to children's literature, and does not seek to examine children's texts as a distinctive body of Antarctic literature. This thesis aims to fill that important gap in research and will offer the first in-depth examination of Antarctic literature written for a child audience. Spufford's extensive study of perceptions of the Arctic and Antarctic within British literature and culture will be a reference point, providing a context for British cultural attitudes towards the Antarctic landscape. This thesis will add to Spufford's work through an analysis of how cultural views of the Antarctic have shaped how this landscape has been represented for a child audience. I will use Leane's generic analysis as an organisational model, outlining the key genres of Antarctic literature for children, and offering both close reading and broader generic analysis of the literature about the Antarctic for child readers. Through an analysis of texts published in Britain which take the Antarctic as their primary setting, this thesis will demonstrate that children's literature plays an important role in the history of cultural and intellectual engagement with the continent.

All of the texts examined in this thesis take the form of prose fiction or non-fiction prose narratives written by British authors or published in Britain between 1895 and the present day. This thesis represents a longitudinal study that includes an evaluation of over a century of writing for children about the continent. British literature has been chosen as the focus of this thesis due to the important role that Britain has played in Antarctic history, and equally due to role that the Antarctic has played in British history. As Klaus Dodds remarks, the British Antarctic Territory "is the largest remaining element of the imperial portfolio rebranded in 1999 as Overseas Territories" (Dodds, 2006, p.59). It was in the Antarctic that the whaling industry experienced its last act, which saw the sub-Antarctic islands, many of

them owned or claimed by Britain, transformed into bustling factory towns that processed and shipped whale oil, and other by-products. While whaling activities in the Antarctic first focused the attention of the British public on the Antarctic, it was the "Heroic Era" expeditions, many led by British explorers, which solidified the landscape's place in the cultural consciousness. The temporal period covered by this thesis begins in 1895 because this date marks the beginning of a period of intense interest in the Antarctic. At the Sixth International Geographical Congress in London in 1895 Carsten Borchgrevink (an Anglo-Norwegian explorer) related his experiences of landing on Antarctica and proposed an overwintering expedition. The Congress concluded with the unanimous resolution stating that "the exploration of the Antarctic regions is the greatest piece of geographical exploration still to be undertaken" (Francioni & Scovazzi, 1996, p.640). This resolution gave significant impetus to existing British interests in the Antarctic and ushered in an era of intensive exploration in the continent.

This thesis will add to the growing body of work which explores the representation of landscape in children's literature, supplementing existing work through a critical analysis of the representation of wilderness, with the Antarctic as a case-study landscape. The 'spatial turn' in children's literature studies has resulted in a number of recent publications which focus on landscape representation within children's fiction. These include Sidney Dobrin and Kenneth B. Kidd's 2004 *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism*, Jane Suzanne Carroll's 2011 *Landscape in Children's Literature*, and Maria Sachiko Cecire, Hannah Field, Kavita Mudan Finn and Malini Roy's 2015 collection of essays *Space and Place in Children's Literature, 1789 to the Present*. These texts offer fascinating insights into how a variety of landscapes have been imagined within literature, and provide frameworks through which to view the representation of place and space in literature for children. However, there remains a significant gap in knowledge regarding the study of wilderness and how this is

represented for child readers. Dobrin and Kidd entitle their collection *Wild Things*, however the majority of articles in this collection focus on the fictional representation of domestic spaces, often within England. Naomi Wood's article "(Em)bracing Icy Mothers" is a notable exception as it includes an exploration of spaces such as the Arctic, however Wood's article is centrally focused on the 'cold mother figure' rather than the specific landscapes from which these figures emerge in literature. In *Landscape in Children's Literature*, Jane Suzanne Carroll explored the representation of landscape, focusing on four key topoi: the Sanctuary Topos, the Green Topos; the Roadway Topos; and the Lapsed Topos. Carroll's work examines how forms of space or "topoi" have been represented across a range of texts for children and she creates a vocabulary with which to analyse landscape representations. However, wilderness is addressed only very briefly within Carroll's text as the focus is on home landscapes. Cecire et al.'s collection is similarly focused on 'home' spaces. Elzetta Steenkamp's article, "Sinister Ecology: Space, Environmental Justice, and Belonging in Jenny Robson's Savannah 2116 AD", does consider ideas of wilderness and wild landscapes, however her analysis is limited primarily to one text, Jenny Robson's *Savannah 2116 AD*, and so does not seek to provide a broader view of representations of wilderness within children's literature. The omission of wilderness landscapes from previous considerations of space and place has resulted in limited theories of spatial representation within children's literature. The thesis will explore writing for children about the Antarctic, a landscape that has often been represented as the epitome of wild landscape and will examine how these authors imagine the Antarctic landscape and construct the space as a wilderness for their child readers.

The broad chronological range of texts explored in this thesis will enable an analysis of how representations of wilderness have evolved over the past century. Theorists of wilderness such as Roderick Nash (1967) and cultural geographer Dennis Cosgrove (1984) have noted that there has been a considerable shift in the cultural perception of wilderness within Western

cultures. Roderick Nash has argued that while wilderness was once "the unknown, the disordered, the dangerous" (1982, p.xii), it now enjoys widespread popularity (1982, p.xi). This thesis will argue that there is not a simple movement from fear or hatred of wilderness to veneration of wilderness within writing about the Antarctic. Contemporary Antarctic texts do not uniformly encourage the child reader to revere wilderness landscapes, indeed my research has shown that many twenty-first century texts perpetuate long-standing hostility towards wilderness. Through detailed analysis of individual texts and genres within Antarctic literature for children, the thesis will demonstrate how the idea of wilderness shifts and changes. Throughout the thesis I will draw on the work of cultural geographers Yi Fu Tuan (1993) and Simon Estok (2009) to explore how the Antarctic has been positioned as a hostile wilderness or 'alien' landscape within children's literature. I seek to draw on, and add to, the existing work by Dobrin and Kidd, Carroll and Cecire et al. In the final chapter of the thesis, I will also utilise the work of ecocritics such as Clare Bradford and Greta Gaard who have theorised children's engagement with 'real' and imaginary landscapes and the ecopedagogical potential of literature as a tool for shaping children's experiences of place.

Three central recurring themes which are examined, in a variety of ways, across all chapters in this thesis are space, time, and death. These themes inform the key theoretical frameworks which draw together the wide variety of texts explored in this thesis. This thesis focuses on the representation of landscape – specifically the physical landscape of the Antarctic and the seascapes which surround this continent. Landscape theory, in particular the work of theorists who interrogate the construction of wilderness, and theories of landscape representation in literature for children provide a framework for the interrogation of representations of space within the texts under examination. Time is an important element of the representation of space which has sometimes been overlooked in previous examinations of landscape in children's literature such as Dobrin & Kidd's 2004 collection of essays *Wild*

Things, which contains sixteen separate articles none of which consider the construction of time as an essential element of landscape representation. In order to reinstate the importance of time in landscape studies, throughout the thesis I employ Bakhtin's theory of chronotopes to explore how space-time is represented in writing for children about the Antarctic. I draw on Maria Nikolajeva's work on chronotopes in children's literature as elaborated in her 1996 *Children's Literature Comes of Age* and *From Mythic to Linear* (2000). I trace the dominant chronotopes in Antarctic children's literature, and identify and detail new chronotopes which are key to understanding how time and space work together within this field of literature. The final theme explored in this thesis is death. The cultural history of the Antarctic has a significant impact on all of the literature produced for children about the continent. Foundational works of Antarctic literature such as Coleridge's 'Rime' or Poe's *Pym* created an image of the Antarctic as a mysterious and deadly place. This perception was reinforced by the first expeditions that sought to explore the interior of the Antarctic continent in the early twentieth century, many of which ended in death or serious injury. In Britain, the deaths of Robert F. Scott and his four companions on their return from the South Pole during the 1910-1913 *Terra Nova* expedition gripped the public imagination and cemented the popular perception of the Antarctic as a landscape of death. Throughout this thesis I set the primary texts within their appropriate historical contexts, tracing how events such as the development of the whaling industry, or the deaths of Scott and his crew, shaped the literature produced for children about the context. In this way I emphasise the relationship of space to time in the creation of fictionalised versions of this landscape.

Antarctic Exploration and the "Heroic Era"

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, while the rest of the world map was being slowly filled in and fought over, the Antarctic remained a persistent unknown. The first person to set

foot on the continent was American sealer Captain John Davis in 1821 but the dangers posed by pack ice and harsh environmental conditions meant that it was not until the end of the 19th century that land-based expeditions made serious incursions onto the mainland[2]. Before the advent of land-based exploration in Antarctica, writers and philosophers were forced to guess what the bottom of the world might look like, and the types of people who might inhabit the Antarctic. The first name given to the area was 'Terra Australis Incognita', the Unknown Southern Land. Sara Wheeler writes:

> In AD 150 Ptolemy drew a continent on his map called Terra Australis Incognita, the Unknown Southern Land, and the existence of an Antarctica became fixed in the collective geographic mind […] Plancius's Planisphere published in 1592, shows both the continent and circulus antarctius, Plancus, Mercator and the other medieval cartographers struggling to make sense of it all, interpreted medieval theory in the light of Spanish and Portuguese voyages. They decided, on at best flimsy evidence, that this land must be very big, mightily hard of access – and populated. (1997, p.34)

The ancient Greeks surmised that there must be land at the southern end of the world. But the specifics of the terrain, or the possible inhabitants of this landscape remained unknown. In the narrative of his first expedition, Antarctic explorer Robert F. Scott wrote, "the history of the Antarctic Regions commences at a much later period [than Arctic history and exploration], and attention was drawn to them, not so much by the voyages of discoverers as by the persistent delineations of a great Southern continent by the map makers" (2014, p.2). Cartographers imagined a landscape "more bountiful than the Americas" (Day, 2012, p.1) but these maps were largely inaccurate and based solely on supposition. Early Antarctic

[2] In early 1821 Davis went ashore onto Antarctica and left a documented account of this event. And as D.W.H. Walton notes he "was the first person to set foot on the continent by 74 years" (1987, p.8). There were no serious incursions onto mainland Antarctica until the early 1900s. See Walton, D.W.H. (1987) *Antarctic Science*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge UK.

expeditions such as those led by Captain James Cook sought to finally dispel the theories and create new maps of the Antarctic but at the end of Cook's expeditions in the 1770s he concluded that this continent "perhaps does not exist" (as cited in Day, 2012, p.5). Cook also predicted that no expedition would go further south than he had, due to the challenging environmental conditions and the negligible returns available. Cook was proved wrong however, when, in 1819, Russian naval officer Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen led the expedition that crossed the Antarctic Circle for the second time. Von Bellingshausen is credited with proving that Antarctica was a continent and not a collection of islands, and several landmarks in Antarctica still bear his name. The development of the whaling trade off South Georgia led to further discoveries from the late 18th century into the middle of the 19th century. Exploration continued in the 19th century with significant discoveries by English naval officers Edward Bransfield and James Weddell, and later James Clarke Ross, the American Captain Wilkes, Carsten Borchgrevink the Anglo-Norwegian explorer, and Carl Larsen who led the first two Norwegian expeditions late between 1892-1894. The names of these explorers are written onto the landscape with place names such as the Ross Ice Shelf, the Weddell Sea and the Larsen Ice Shelf. Later, explorers in the early twentieth century succeeded in dispelling many of the myths which had emerged about the Antarctic through expeditions which ventured into the interior of the southernmost continent. These early expeditions into the Antarctic interior became known as the "Heroic Era" of Antarctic exploration and it is primarily this period which continues to shape cultural perception of the Antarctic today.

The term "Heroic Era" was first coined by J. Gordon Hayes in *The Conquest of the South Pole* (1936). Gordon Hayes wrote:

> A large amount of valuable work was accomplished by these ventures, for the most part under difficult conditions. The footsteps of the British explorers were

> continually dogged by disaster and some of them purchased their discoveries with their lives. As a small tribute to these gallant men it is suggested that this period should be known as the Heroic Era of Antarctic Exploration. (1936, p.29-30)

The explorers who led "Heroic Era" expeditions include Britons Robert Falcon Scott, Ernest Shackleton, and William Speirs Bruce (who led the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition 1902-1904), Australian Douglas Mawson, and Norwegian Roald Amundsen who in 1912 led the first expedition to reach the South Pole. Gordon Hayes argued that the "Heroic Era" fell within the period 1901 – 1914, beginning with the departure of Scott's *Discovery* expedition and ending in 1914 with the outbreak of the First World War. Contemporary understanding of the "Heroic Era" has expanded and the period is defined as beginning in 1895 with the Sixth International Geographical Congress in London and ending in 1922 with the death of Ernest Shackleton (Mills, 2003, p.299). At the Sixth International Geographical Congress in London in 1895 the explorer Carsten Borchgrevink related his experiences of landing on Antarctica and proposed an overwintering expedition. Simultaneously Sir Clements R. Markham, President of the Royal Geographical Society, had been lobbying vigorously for new British Antarctic expeditions. His efforts encouraged the unanimous resolution at the end of the congress stating that "the exploration of the Antarctic regions is the greatest piece of geographical exploration still to be undertaken" (Francioni & Scovazzi, 1996, p.640). The race for the North Pole was being dominated by the Americans and there was pressure on the British to be seen to be pioneering exploration in the South.

Just six years later, in 1901, Scott was departing for his first major expedition aboard the ship *Discovery*. In 1907 Shackleton who had been with Scott on *Discovery* returned to the Antarctic to lead his own expedition *Nimrod*. Shackleton reached within 100 miles from the South Pole and achieved a new 'farthest south'. In 1910 Scott departed for his second Antarctic expedition aboard the *Terra Nova*. Scott's team became involved in a 'race to the

pole' when the Norwegian team under Roald Amundsen announced that they would be heading south and sprinting for the Pole. When Scott arrived at the Pole he discovered that his team had been beaten by the Norwegians. Devastated he turned around and headed for base camp but he and his entire five-man 'polar party' perished on the return journey. This polar tragedy gained huge public interest and the world poured over the accounts of the expedition including Scott's own diaries which were published posthumously. As I will explore throughout this thesis, the narratives of this expedition continue to shape representations of the Antarctic, and specifically of the functioning of time, in children's literature about the Antarctic. Undeterred by his former mentor's death in the Antarctic, Shackleton returned in 1914 aboard *Endurance* aiming to complete the first crossing of the Antarctic continent. On the *Endurance* expedition Shackleton, too, met with disaster as his ship was trapped in the pack ice and eventually crushed. Forced to decamp to the ice Shackleton and his crew began a nearly two-year struggle for survival. It is this expedition, and the miraculous survival of the entire crew despite the seemingly impossible circumstances, for which Shackleton is best remembered.

These expeditions, particularly the tragic final expedition of Scott, gripped the public imagination and, even a century later there remains a significant public interest in these stories. Speaking of the "Heroic Era" narratives Spufford writes, "the stories do survive; Scott's story in particular survives" (1996, p.4). In more recent years, however, Scott's long-time rival, Ernest Shackleton, has come to the fore and is now celebrated in exhibitions, biographies, leadership forums and, of course, children's texts. Stephanie Barczewski (2007: xii) argues that Shackleton has now come to be regarded as "the great leader, the great explorer, and the greater hero". These two explorers, Scott and Shackleton, enjoy pre-eminent positions within British polar history, and it is primarily their narratives, particularly the stories of the *Terra Nova* and *Endurance* expeditions, that continue to be repeated and retold

for child audiences today. One reason that the "Heroic Era" expeditions have resonated so forcefully within children's literature is connected to the time in which the expeditions took place. John Bristow in *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (2015) notes that since the 1870s there had been an increasing emphasis on the teaching of geography to children, particularly boys, and the by 1900 the focus had expanded to include " history of a politically motivated kind" which became "a subject to be studied 'as a rule' in elementary education" (Bristow, p.19). Real-life Antarctic adventure stories provided a perfect mix of adventure and imperialist geography. From the time of the first "Heroic Era" expeditions in the early years of the twentieth century, the stories were positioned as important historical narratives focusing on explorers who were contributing significantly to the vital fields of geography and science. The 'Heroic Era' narratives seemed to demonstrate the breadth of Britain's Empire, stretching as it did right into the vast depths of the Antarctic, while simultaneously demonstrating the heroic nature of the British male. Bristow further argues that the politicised history and geography lessons which began to be taught in the late nineteenth century "reinforced already established imperialist assumptions that had for many years acted as the main precepts guiding the production of adventure fiction for children" (2015, p.20). and fitted neatly within the imperialist ideology of children's adventure literature which persisted well into the twentieth century. While the 'Heroic Era' narratives have often been presented as non-fiction historical narratives, they can also be seen as adhering to the structure and ethos of classic boys' adventure fiction by authors such as Haggard or Ballantyne. Like Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1858), the *Terra Nova* and *Endurance* narratives focus on groups of males toiling together in remote locations for the glory of empire. This thesis will argue that the stories of the "Heroic Era" are still often positioned as non-fiction historical narratives, rather than adventure fiction, and that their status as 'historical literature' enables authors to continue to celebrate British imperialism without attracting the levels of scrutiny

which might accompany the publication of a similarly nationalistic or imperialist fictional text for children today. In Chapters Two and Three I will chart the connection between the narratives produced by and about Scott and Shackleton and adventure literature for children and will demonstrate how the adult explorers drew on the world of children's adventure literature when they write their own stories of exploration.

However, it is not only the stories retelling the "Heroic Era" narratives which have been impacted by the events of the period. The stories of Scott and Shackleton have achieved the status of myth and elements of the stories are reimagined, sometimes subversively as I will examine in Chapter Four, across a range of genres within Antarctic literature for children. Just as the suppositional maps of the Antarctic influenced authors such as Coleridge and Poe to create fantastic visions of the Antarctic as an uncanny space inhabited by mysterious or supernatural societies, the accounts of early Antarctic exploration fundamentally changed how the Antarctic was perceived within British culture. It became a landscape for heroic action and specifically for male achievement. The influence of the "Heroic Era" narratives on Antarctic children's literature is perhaps most obvious within adventure narratives where fictional explorers head South to find fame and fortune. It can also be seen in early Antarctic whaling literature published after the "Heroic Era" expeditions as young protagonists re-enact "Heroic Era" style treks across the ice or through direct references to explorers or the appearance of explorers' huts in the landscape. Even Antarctic animal stories, the newest genre of Antarctic literature which has developed since the 1990s, sometimes contain echoes of the "Heroic Era" such as the appearance of explorers on sleds drawn by dog-teams in Karma Wilson's *Where Is Home Little Pip?* (2008) or even more explicitly in Sandra Markle's *Animals Robert Scott Saw* (2008) which links the scientific work of Scott's early expeditions with the contemporary threats to Antarctic wildlife and environment posed by climate change.

Space and the idea of 'wilderness'

In his Foreword to Grahame Cook's (1990) *The Future of Antarctica*: *Exploitation Versus Preservation*, former Prime Minster of Australia, R.J.L. Hawke wrote, "Antarctica is unique. This icy continent is a place of breath-taking beauty and the world's last great wilderness" (as cited in Cook, 1990, p.vi). This perception of the Antarctic as the "last great wilderness" is, today, commonplace. It is used as often to encourage tourists to purchase expensive Antarctic cruises as it is by researchers seeking funding for environmental studies. The phrase is indicative of the value that modern western culture locates within wilderness landscapes. Wilderness has not, however, always received this level of veneration. John Ruskin wrote of the ancient Greek artists and poets: "they shrank with dread or hatred from all the ruggedness of lower nature, from the wrinkled forest bark, the jagged hill-crest, and irregular, inorganic storm of sky; looking to these for the most part as adverse powers" (Ruskin, 1998, p.80). Greg Garrard notes a similar ambivalence towards wilderness within the Judaeo Christian tradition and argues that in "early modern philosophy and literature" this ambivalence had been resolved "into something approaching outright hostility": "Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1684) explained mountain ranges as being the physical outcome of God's displeasure with mankind, scars inflicted upon a previously unwrinkled globe by the 'Great Flood' that Noah and his family survived" (2004, p.63). In many cultures throughout history wilderness has been understood as a blight or a hostile force to be overcome and subdued.

Roderick Nash in *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1967) traces the changing cultural perceptions of wilderness. He argues that wilderness is now widely celebrated and notes:

> From the perspective of intellectual history, this appreciation of wilderness is nothing less than revolutionary. Ancient biases against the wild are deeply rooted in human psychology and in the human compulsion to understand, order, and transform the environment in the interest of survival and, later, of success. Wilderness was the unknown, the disordered, the uncontrolled. (1982, p.xi)

Both Nash and Garrard argue that the Romantic movement and the connection between wild landscapes and the sublime prompted a wholescale change in the way that wild landscapes were perceived (Nash, 1982; Garrard, 2004). American wilderness enthusiasts such as Thomas Muir and Henry David Thoreau celebrated wild landscapes and positioned these places as spaces untarnished by man (Garrard, 2004, p.66-69). William Cronon argued that wilderness eventually became "the natural, unfallen antithesis of an unnatural civilization that has lost its soul" (1996, p.80). He argues that wilderness is seen as "a place of freedom in which we can recover our true selves we have lost to the corrupting influences of our artificial lives. Most of all, it is the ultimate landscape of authenticity" (1996, p.80). This movement from an understanding of wilderness as "the unknown, the disordered", to a perception of wilderness as something which needs to be preserved and protected from humans, is evident within Antarctic children's literature. The earliest genres of Antarctic literature for children, whaling and exploration literature, clearly position the landscape as a hostile antagonist which must be overcome by the heroic male(s) at the centre of the texts. The most recent genre of Antarctic literature to develop, penguin picturebooks, in contrast, positions the landscape as a life-sustaining space which needs to be protected from human invaders. However, there is not a clear linear movement between these two positions. Many contemporary Antarctic texts for children still perpetuate a view of the Antarctic as a hostile place and still implicitly seek to fix and control this 'wilderness' landscape. Conversely, there are also examples of early Antarctic whaling texts in which protagonists reflect (albeit

briefly) on their role in the Antarctic, and the damage that they might be doing to the wildlife and environment. One reason that depictions of the Antarctic as hostile wilderness remain, is perhaps to continue to legitimise the 'heroic' actions of prominent explorers such as Scott and Shackleton. Examining the construction of wilderness in his text, *Landscape and Memory* (1995) Simon Schama questions:

> if mountains were not indomitable peaks, then millennia of obsession with their subjugation seemed little other than an exercise in imperial vanity. If their slopes were delicate and graceful, then the hyperbole of the Romantics about "horrid crags" was so much self-indulgent sensationalism. If mountains were soft and giving things, why not as well carve an image of woman as much of man into their side? (2004, p.512)

The exercises in imperial vanity in the Antarctic came at considerable financial cost, and at the expense of many lives, and so there is a vested interest in continuing to position the Antarctic as the ultimate challenging wilderness. Contemporary texts that retell the "Heroic Era" exploration narratives continue to vilify the landscape in order to reify their protagonists. In addition, Antarctic literature has historically been filled with depictions of the landscape as a deadly, unpredictable, and mysterious place, and the children's literature written about the continent are often highly intertextual, subtly referencing Coleridge's 'Rime' Poe's *Pym*, or the exploration diaries of early explorers. I argue, however, that the continuing representation of the Antarctic as a hostile wilderness in children's literature is also connected to a fundamental desire to control or conquer wilderness, and that these texts can be seen to represent what Simon Estok terms an 'ecophobic' view of landscape.

Estok contends that, "Human history is a history of controlling the natural environment, […] of first imagining agency and intent in nature and then quashing that imagined agency and intent. Nature becomes the hateful object in need of our control" (2009, p.210). Estok

argues “the more we talk about representations of nature, the more it becomes clear that there is a need to talk about how contempt for the natural world is a definable and recognizable discourse” (p.204). Estok calls this discourse ecophobia and argues that ecophobia is about control and the human need to have (or imagine having) control over the natural world. Estok defines ecophobia as “representations of nature as an opponent that hurts, hinders, threatens, or kills us” (p.209). Estok argues that this is not an antiquated view of landscape, but one which shapes many contemporary representations of landscape today. Within Antarctic literature for children it is very common to create a combative relationship between the protagonist and the Antarctic landscape. For over a century, writers have created a variety of different stories wherein humans attack, defeat, or are defeated by, the hostile Antarctic continent. In early Antarctic whaling literature, this was positioned as an epic battle between man (or boy becoming man) and nature. While there were many human casualties in this conflict, man was always the inevitable winner. “Heroic Era” literature makes this battle between human and environment more abstract. Instead of fighting huge animals that are surrogates for the Antarctic environment, the explorer-protagonists of these tales take on the icy continent itself. Adventure and fantasy texts depict the Antarctic landscape as a key antagonist against which their protagonists must struggle. Biggles and Dirk Rogers (the hero of a series of ten novels published between 1949 and 1965 by author Frank Crisp), quickly overcome their human opponents; it is their battle with the environment which is most uncertain and which most threatens their ability to survive their icy adventures. Utilising the work of Estok, this thesis will chart how ecophobic representations pervade many genres of writing for children about the Antarctic. However, even this ecophobic attitude towards landscapes and the natural environment is not always straightforward. Francis Spufford notes that Grace Scott, sister of the famed explorer, described one of her brother’s key aims in his Antarctic expeditions as “the hoped-for conquest of raging elements” (as cited in Spufford,

1996, p.26). Spufford sees this aim as encouraged by "an inherited taste for the sublime" (p.26) and argues that this version of the sublime – imagining nature as a terrifying opponent which must be conquered – is often accompanied by another version of the sublime "a dreamed-of conquest *by* raging elements" (p.26, emphasis in original). There is an inherent benefit to perpetuating an ecophobic view of wilderness landscapes because it allows authors to continue to imagine a world that still contains truly wild spaces. The majority of children's texts about the Antarctic pointedly ignore the large population of researchers who now inhabit the Antarctic year-round, or the roads that have been constructed within the space, and instead return again and again to the early "Heroic Era" expeditions because this was a time when the Antarctic represented a truly unknown space, where "raging elements" could still be conquered by, or could conquer, those who chose to enter the landscape. Spufford argues that "The whole existence of something called the sublime, devoted to spectacles of grandeur and terror, testifies that our appetite for tragedies somehow hides an odd species of enjoyment" (1996, p.27). I further argue that the enjoyment of spectacles of suffering and death in the Antarctic is connected to the specific desire to retain this space as "the world's last great wilderness" and that this desire results in the perpetuation of an essentially ecophobic representation of the Antarctic within children's literature.

There are texts which take an alternative "ecophilic" viewpoint, the most overt being stories with animal protagonists. They depict the Antarctic as a place teeming with life, that is a beloved home for the young animal protagonists. These texts often feature scenes of birth with the family at the centre of the narrative, showing how the Antarctic can support and nurture life. Edward O. Wilson's 1984 *Biophilia* defined "biophilia" as the innate "urge to affiliate with other forms of life" (p.85). Wilson argued that through nurturing this innate interest in and sympathy with other living things humans could "understand other organisms" and "place a greater value on them, and on ourselves" (p.7). Developing on Wilson's ideas,

other critics have sought to expand this concept "to incorporate a fuller ecological […] conception of the affinity with life and interconnected life forces" (Albrecht, 2012, p.255). David Sobel has focused specifically on the potential to develop latent ecophilia within children arguing, "We can cure the malaise of ecophobia with ecophilia – supporting children's biological tendency to bond with the natural world" (1996, p.5-6). Ecophilia within literature draws on or supports a love of the natural world. In the final chapter, this thesis will explore the ecophilic representation of the Antarctic through the theoretical framework of ecocriticism, specifically ecocritical work focusing on children's literature, and ideas of ecofeminism and ecopedagogy.

The dichotomy between ecophobia and ecophilia is central to this thesis as I chart the variety of representational modes that have been applied to writing about the Antarctic for children. What becomes clear through an analysis of the diverse approaches taken towards the Antarctic and its representation for children, is that the idea of home is central both to ecophobic writing about the continent and, perhaps, even more so to ecophilic depictions of this landscape. Given the importance of concepts of 'home', and home spaces, in children's literature, as elucidated by Ann Alston (2008), and Jane Suzanne Carroll (2011) among others, this implicit focus on ideas of home in representations of 'wild' landscapes is perhaps unsurprising. Indeed, concepts of home, belonging, and otherness, can be traced in every genre of Antarctic literature which is examined in this thesis. One key framework which I will use to analyse the representation of the home/not home dichotomy in Antarctic literature, which is inextricably tied to the ecophilic/ecophobic representations, is that offered by cultural geographer Yi Fu Tuan in his 1993 article "Desert and Ice: Ambivalent Aesthetics". Tuan outlines a framework for considering the human relationship with home and wilderness spaces. Tuan argues, "Home is not a simple entity," but instead that our idea of home in relation to place "is best seen as a succession of concentric circles" (1993, p.139). At the

centre is the "homeplace" which is centrally defined as an enclosed space. Beyond "homeplace" is "home space" which exists in "increasingly abstract" rings moving outwards from the "homeplace". At the opposite end to "homeplace" is "alien space" which is "normally perceived as threatening" (p.139-140). Tuan specifically positions the polar landscapes as "alien" spaces. The core threat of an "alien space" such as the Antarctic is the annihilation of the "homeplace" and the sanctuary that this space represents. Tuan argues that "Whereas absorption into the sensory realities of home means life, the loss of self in alien space – even if it provides moments of ecstasy – means death" (p.155). The thesis will chart how protagonists in Antarctic children's literature attempt to establish home spaces in the Antarctic, with varying degrees of success.

Throughout the thesis, I demonstrate how genres such as whaling literature and "Heroic Era" narratives include detailed and loving descriptions of ships, as small, enclosed homeplaces bounded on every side by alien spaces which are often dangerous and unpredictable. I will demonstrate how the threat of the destruction of the homeplace, and the consequent loss of self in alien space, overshadows several genres of Antarctic literature as protagonists witness their only physical protection from the wilderness destroyed through shipwreck, or their psychological protections undermined through the threat of madness caused by contact with the wild landscape. In contrast, I argue that penguin picturebooks set in the continent challenge their readers to reconsider their notions of home and what constitutes a homeplace through narratives which demonstrate the deep emotional attachment the animal protagonists feel towards the pebbly beaches and icy plateaus of the Antarctic.

Time and Antarctic Chronotopes

Time is a central element within Antarctic literature for children and is a key focus of this thesis. I utilise Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of chronotopes to examine the representation of

time-space within literature for children about the Antarctic. The term "chronotope" is primarily explored in Bakhtin's essay "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel", first published in 1975 and translated into English in 1981. In his descriptions of the chronotope Bakhtin offers an invaluable theory for making visible the workings of time and the complex relationships between time and space in literature. In "Forms of Time", Bakhtin describes the chronotope as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (1981, p.84). Time does not operate uniformly in literature but variously quickens and slackens, jumps forward and stands still, and the workings of time are impacted by, and in turn impact the space of the text. Bakhtin further contends:

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, likewise, space becomes charged and responsible to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (p.84)

Liisa Steinby argues that while the 'thickening of time' is the element that is privileged in Bakhtin's analysis, space is an essential element that defines the chronotopic nature of the text: "Social localities are not a neutral, passive background of action but on the contrary, determine its chronotopic form. What a person can do is conditioned by the setting and the locality. Here temporality is a temporality of experience and action" (2013, p.120). In addition, this thickening of time is more evident and forceful in some locations than others. In discussing the "road topos" in children's literature, Carroll argues that there are certain forms of narrative in which time is "absolutely inseparable from the spatial dimension" of the text (2011, p.93). I argue that time and space are "absolutely inseparable" in Antarctic children's literature, and that time is a key constitutive element of this field of literature. Through a

chronotopic analysis of children's literature set in the Antarctic, I will explore how different genres of Antarctic literature for children imagines the temporal and spatial relations in the landscape, and how time within this unique landscape impacts protagonists of the children's texts.

Leane references the importance of time in Antarctic literature, arguing that "the most extraordinary thing about the Ice is not its placeness so much as its timeness" and that "Nowhere is this clearer than in the imaginative narratives woven around the continent" (2012, p.154). Leane employs Johannes Fabian concept of allochronism to explore how the Antarctic is represented as a landscape 'out of time' within literature. She discusses cryonic fiction and time-travel narratives wherein the Antarctic landscape disrupts the normal linear functioning of time. Summarising temporal operations in Antarctic fiction, Leane writes that Antarctic texts are "united in their representation of Antarctica as a place offering an alternative to everyday, socialized clock-time" (p.179). While Leane notes the importance of time-space in Antarctic fiction, and references both Bakhtin and Fabian's work on the interaction of time and space in literature, she does not seek to identify dominant chronotopes in Antarctic fiction, or to explore how the various chronotopes utilised within Antarctic fiction shape readers' experiences of these texts. Neither does she offer any chronotopic analysis of specific texts. Instead, she argues that there is no one coherent Antarctic chronotope but, rather, that, "It is better […] to speak of a cluster of related and intersecting Antarctic chronotopes than to demand that the continent tie together space and time in a consistent, singular manner" (p.179). This thesis will expand upon the examination of time in Antarctic fiction which Leane initiates, identifying the chronotopic nature of specific genres and offering close-reading that interrogate how individual authors represent the time-space of the Antarctic in their texts. I will argue that key chronotopes in Antarctic children's literature are cyclical, rather than linear, and will explore how these dominant chronotopes are

subverted and adapted by authors writing about the Antarctic. The thesis will also introduce new chronotopes that I have identified through a thorough analysis of a wide range of Antarctic texts for children. These are the "Heroic Era" chronotope and "brink-time". The "Heroic Era" chronotope is examined primarily in Chapters Two and Three of this thesis. In the "Heroic Era" chronotope, the actions of the early Antarctic explorers reverberate through the landscape, creating a cyclical temporal pattern wherein death loses permanence as individuals reappear and events are continually repeated. The "Heroic Era" chronotope primarily impacts those texts which retell the stories of Scott and Shackleton, but also affects other genres such as adventure literature and whaling literature as the landscape remains defined by the actions of the early explorers and the cyclical temporal pattern initiated by their actions. A second new chronotope, 'Brink-time', is examined in Chapter Six in the context of recent animal picturebooks set in the Antarctic that are focused on the ecological consequences of human actions in the landscape and the dangers posed to the Antarctic environment and wildlife. Events within this chronotope take place at a tipping-point as environmental disaster is threatened if previous behaviours are continued unchanged. It is a chronotope characterised by uncertainty as the future is dangerously unclear. Through looking at how time and space are depicted and how these elements work together within literature, the theory of chronotopes provides a valuable insight into how authors writing about the Antarctic imagine the continent, how they create this space as a wilderness – a world apart from landscapes with which the child reader is familiar. Chronotopic analysis demonstrates how the Antarctic is depicted as both temporally and physically distant to 'known' landscapes and provides a framework for considering how time within this wild landscape impacts upon the child and adult protagonists of Antarctic literature for children.

Death

In September 2012, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, the veteran British explorer, announced that he was part of a group planning to be the first team to cross Antarctica on foot during the Antarctic winter. This expedition would aim to complete the intended route of Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition and to do this in the depths of Antarctic winter when the temperatures regularly reach below -60°C. While the expedition was set to trace Shackleton's intended route it was scheduled to take place 100 years after the attempt on the South Pole by Scott and so, in different ways, echoed the two most prominent Antarctic expeditions of the early twentieth century. The century-old rivalry between Britain and Norway, adversaries in the "race to the pole", was cited among the motivations for the expedition as Sir Ranulph announced (with some humour): "We heard that Norwegian explorers were contemplating this. We realised we were going to have to have a go" (Price, 2012, n.pag). However, like Scott and Shackleton before him, Fiennes was unable to achieve his goal and was forced to abandon the expedition due to severe frostbite on his left hand. The frostbite occurred when Sir Ranulph took off his mitts to fix his ski binding, a simple act on which Sir Ranulph commented: "People will say, 'Surely you know you mustn't take your mitts off completely.' But if [I hadn't], I'd have sat there, gone nowhere, and died of cold. It's just one of those things" (as cited in Siddique, 2013, n.pag). Fiennes's aborted expedition demonstrated that the Antarctic is still a place where, sometimes, just standing still can be deadly.

Within many genres of Antarctic literature for children, to travel to the Antarctic is to confront death. Survival in these texts often represents a victory over death while the inability to overcome or evade death is presented as a form of heroic failure. Perhaps more than any other genre of Antarctic literature, the "Heroic Era" texts are centrally about death and survival. The deaths of Scott and his crew and the public interest in this story of Antarctic tragedy fixed the continent as a deadly space in the cultural consciousness. Beau Riffenburgh

notes, "the most powerful hero is the dead hero, particularly the martyred hero, since it is through his death for the cause that his heroic status can be most easily created, interpreted and manipulated" (1993, p.6). Scott's emotive diaries and 'Message to the Public' began the process of interpreting and manipulating the events of the *Terra Nova* expedition and created a compelling narrative which authors for children have continued to represent largely unchanged for child audiences for over a century. It is the knowledge of Scott's death which renders Shackleton's survival so miraculous within the story of the *Endurance*. Writing of Scott, Leane argues that death "ensured that the heroic images of the polar party would not be moderated by the mundanities of their remaining lives" (2012, p.86). However, the story of Shackleton's *Endurance*, and the way that the events of the expedition have become removed from any contextual information on the lives that the explorers lived after they escaped the ice, demonstrates that the survival of Shackleton and his crew is seen as heroic and noteworthy, not because this allowed them to live remarkable lives after the expedition, but solely because, through surviving, they faced and conquered death. This thesis will argue that both of these key Antarctic narratives are centrally focused on death, and that changing cultural perceptions of death can be seen to shape how the stories have been retold and received since the events took place in the early twentieth century. I will argue that Scott's desire to represent his own death and the deaths of his companions as 'heroic' or 'good' was influenced by this history of British polar tragedy, in particular the disastrous final voyage of Lord John Franklin and the rumours of cannibalism which followed the discovery of the crew's remains. I will draw on Francis Spufford's *Ice and the English Imagination* to interrogate ideas of 'good death' within the British polar exploratory tradition.

However, it is not only "Heroic Era" texts in which death plays a central role. Death permeates nearly every genre of writing for children about the Antarctic. Even before Scott and his companions died on the Antarctic ice, the continent had already long been associated

with death. Foundational Antarctic texts such as Coleridge's 'Rime', wherein an ancient mariner sails "a zombie-crewed ship with a decaying albatross around his neck" (Leane, 2012, p.19) and Poe's *Pym* which abandons its protagonist "teetering on the brink of a terrifying South Polar cataract" (Leane, 2012, p.19) created images of a landscape of death. Leane argues that texts such as Coleridge's 'Rime' and Poe's *Pym* ushered in a gothic tradition within Antarctic literature in which "Antarctica is metaphorically and literally the underside of the world; a weird, hellish region that produces monsters and lures unsuspecting sailors and explorers to unspeakable fates" (Leane, 2012, p.19). The children's literature set in Antarctica builds on foundational Antarctic texts to create a picture of a continent where lethal, and sometimes supernatural, dangers lie around every corner, and in every crevasse. Antarctic adventure stories, particularly fantastic adventure stories, draw heavily on the gothic literature written about the continent. These texts are filled with uncanny figures such as ghosts and madmen who threaten the lives of the protagonists, as well as uncanny sites such as shipwrecks which speak of death and decay. Even early whaling narratives are focused on death, both the death of the whales which are being pursed and the deaths of the whalers who are lost in the efforts to overcome this living manifestation of Antarctic wilderness.

This thesis will examine how the Antarctic is repeatedly connected with death within children's literature. I will argue that through associating the Antarctic with death, authors perpetuate ecophobic views of the continent, and establish the Antarctic as a fundamentally unhomely space. I will examine how death shapes the representation of time in Antarctic literature, as the dead reappear, breaking the normal linear functioning of time, and creating a cyclical pattern of life and death which begins again each time the story is retold and reimagined. I will draw on critical work which interrogates the changing cultural conception of death including Jupp and Gittings' 1999 *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, Philip

Ariès seminal study *Western Attitudes Towards Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (1974), and Pat Jalland's "Victorian Death and its Decline, 1850-1918" (1999).

Chapter Overview

The chapters in this thesis are organised according to the genres identified by the survey of Antarctic literature completed as part of this thesis. Through an analysis of each main genre of writing for children about the Antarctic, the thesis aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the representation of the Antarctic, within British literature for children. There are six dominant genres in British children's literature about the Antarctic, these are: 1) whaling literature, 2) "Heroic Era" narratives, 3) subversions or rewritings of the "Heroic Era" narratives, 4) adventure literature, 5) fantasy literature, and 6) animal stories set in the Antarctic. While these are the most popular genres, the distribution of texts is not even across the different genres. As described above, "Heroic Era" literature is the most populous genre of literature for children about the Antarctic published or written in Britain; the earliest examples were published in 1910 and texts in this genre continue to be published today. There has been a significant increase in publications prompted by the anniversaries of Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition (1910-1913) and Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition (1914-1916). Due to the sheer number of texts in this area and the impact of the events of the 'Heroic Era' on the broader field of Antarctic literature for children, the analysis of this genre has been broken down into two chapters, one focusing on retellings of Robert Scott's *Terra Nova* narrative, and the other on Ernest Shackleton's *Endurance* narrative. The genres of adventure and fantasy literature are examined together within Chapter Five. The decision to examine these two genres in one chapter was made because the fantasy texts identified also take the form of adventure texts which share significant similarities with the other adventure literature identified within the primary text survey, including narrative structure and dominant themes

and tropes. In addition, there are comparatively fewer texts within both the fantastic adventure and adventure genres than other genres, such as 'Heroic Era' or animal stories. The chapters are arranged chronologically according to date of emergence of the genres. This facilitates a comparative analysis of the dominant genres of Antarctic literature for children and an interrogation of the changing cultural perceptions of the Antarctic within British children's literature over the course of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. In addition, through setting the texts within their historical and temporal contexts, this thesis highlights the interconnected nature of space and time within these texts. Chapter Four somewhat disrupts the chronological development in the thesis; however given the focus of these subversive texts on the 'Heroic Era' narratives it was deemed important to interrogate the rewritings of the 'Heroic Era' in the context of the texts and narratives that they seek to disrupt.

Chapter One focuses on Antarctic whaling literature, the earliest genre of Antarctic literature for children. The chapter examines a total of six texts, the most recent published in 1966. I draw on the social and historical context of the whaling and sealing industries, which developed in the Antarctic in the early part of the twentieth century, with specific reference to Tønnessen and Johnsen's 1982 *The History of Modern Whaling*. The chapter examines the commodification of wild nature within these texts and the combative relationship that is established between the child protagonists and the wild landscape. I argue that the stories take the form of bildungsroman where growth is connected with physical and emotional suffering. Finally, I chart how changes within the whaling industry, such as the introduction of quotas to protect whale populations from over-hunting, impact upon the whaling literature set in the Antarctic and foreshadow the ecologically-focused texts which emerged in the late twentieth century.

Chapter Two examines the narrative of Robert F. Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition, and the children's stories which retell this established narrative. This chapter interrogates the largest number of texts, sixteen in total, published between 1910 and 2012, highlighting the enduring focus on Scott in literature for children. The primary texts are primarily prose narratives but include a small number of picturebooks. I argue that the majority of children's texts which retell the story of the *Terra Nova* rely heavily on Scott's own diaries and in doing so allow the explorer to retain control over how the events of the expedition are understood. This chapter explores the influence of children's literature on Scott's own diaries and 'Message to the Public' focusing particularly on Scott's relationship with prominent author J.M. Barrie. Drawing on the work of Michele Le Deoff and Gillian Rose, I argue that, in order to position Scott's expedition as a success, the *Terra Nova* narratives for children vilify the Antarctic landscape and can be seen to be 'masculinist', as they depict an aggressive feminised landscape which is eventually 'conquered' by the heroic male explorers. I outline the "Heroic Era" chronotope and the complex functioning of time within "Heroic Era" stories. Finally, the chapter explores the representation of heroic death which appears in the retellings of Scott's *Terra Nova* narrative.

Chapter Three considers texts that retell Shackleton's *Endurance* narrative. A total of eleven texts are examined, all published between 1960 and 2015, which is indicative of the comparative lack of interest in Shackleton during the first half of the twentieth century while in the same years stories about Scott proliferated. As in Chapter Two, the majority of texts are prose narratives but there are also picturebooks among the primary texts and illustrated texts such as Grill's *Shackleton's Journey*. This chapter argues that children's literature has played a key role in the resurgence of interest in Shackleton which has occurred since the late 1990s. While the explorers' daring escape occupies the foreground of many retellings, I shift focus to the early section of the narrative in which the explorers are trapped in the ice.

Concentrating on this period of siege, and how it is represented in the children's *Endurance* texts, I assert that there is a surprising domestic focus in this section of the narrative which adds pathos to the eventual destruction of the ship. I build on the analysis of the "Heroic Era" chronotope in Chapter Two and explore how this chronotope shapes the *Endurance* narratives. Finally, applying Tuan's theory of space, I argue that the sinking of the ship represents the realisation of the greatest fears associated with alien space, the danger of being subsumed or consumed by the landscape.

Chapter four focuses on texts which subvert the established "Heroic Era" narratives. The chapter examines two texts, Geraldine McCaughrean's *The White Darkness* (2005) which challenges Scott's *Terra Nova* narrative and Caroline Alexander's *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* (1997) which reconsiders Shackleton's *Endurance* narrative. The limited focus of Chapter Four is unique within the thesis. These two texts have been selected for in-depth analysis as they have both helped to reshape the field of Antarctic literature for children in different ways. The chapter will demonstrate how Alexander's text helped stimulate the contemporary resurgence of interest in Shackleton, while simultaneously questioning the *Endurance* narrative and offering an alternative perspective on the expedition leader. McCaughrean's *The White Darkness* represents an innovative method for utilising the 'Heroic Era' source material within literature for children, without simply retelling the established narrative. McCaughrean's text also received significant critical attention, winning the Michael L. Pintz award (2008), the Whitbread Children's Book Award (2008), and shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal (2005) and the Calderdale Children's Book Award (2006). This attention can be seen to have helped to stimulate interest in stories of the 'Heroic Era' for child readers, which, along with recent anniversaries, has led to increased production of 'Heroic Era' stories for child readers in the twenty-first century. The focus on only two texts allows for more detailed close-reading of the texts to elucidate how they radically reimagine

the underlying myths of the 'Heroic Era'. I examine how the texts disrupt the "Heroic Era" chronotope and draw on Bakhtin and Nikolajeva to examine how these authors reimagine the time-space of the Antarctic. I then look at the figure of the hero in the texts and how these two authors subvert the central heroic figures of Scott and Shackleton. I utilise Nikolajeva's theory of aetonormativity (2010) and Clémentine Beauvais's development of this theory in her 2013 article 'The Problem of Power', to demonstrate how the power-balance between the child or animal protagonists in these stories is highlighted or undermined.

Chapter Five examines Antarctic adventure stories, including fantastic adventure narratives. All of the texts can be understood as adventure narratives, and there are clear similarities within the texts regarding themes, structure and characterisation. All of the texts introduce the possibility of the supernatural, however within the fantastic adventure narratives this possibility is realised as the texts reveal civilisations and a range of supernatural and fantastic creatures hidden under the Antarctic ice. Thirteen texts are examined in total, all of which are prose narratives published between 1913 and 2001. The adventure texts, both the fantastic adventure and the more straightforward adventure fiction, draw heavily on foundational Antarctic fantasy literature such as Coleridge's 'Rime' and Poe's *Pym* to create highly intertextual narratives. One area where this influence is most overt is the focus on the uncanny in the adventure texts for children. This chapter draws on Freud's theory of the uncanny, and Nicholas Royle's elaboration of this theory in his 2003 *The Uncanny* to interrogate how adventure literature situates the Antarctic as an uncanny space. In his 1919 article on the uncanny Freud highlighted the centrality of ideas of home to the uncanny, returning to the German root of the word 'unheimlich' meaning unhomely. This chapter examines how the Antarctic is represented as essentially unhomely space, noting how sites such as the shipwreck represent failed homeplaces in the adventure texts. I explore the uncanny figures and sites which reappear through the Antarctic adventure narratives, and

analyse how the appearance of the uncanny changes within fantastic adventure narratives, as uncertainty over apparently supernatural events is resolved through the confirmation of the supernatural, and the hidden worlds which exist within the chthonic spaces of the Antarctic in these texts.

Chapter Six considers penguin stories, focusing on nine primary texts all but one of which take the form of picturebooks. Animal stories represent a substantial proportion of current publishing about the Antarctic for children. While a variety of animals are represented, penguins are the primary protagonists in these texts. Since the turn of the twenty-first century this has become one of the most popular genres of Antarctic literature for children published in Britain, alongside "Heroic Era" texts. These two genres, penguin picturebooks and "Heroic Era" exploration literature present starkly opposing images of the Antarctic landscape. Drawing on David Lewis's 2001 *Reading Contemporary Picturebooks* and Nikolajeva and Scott's 2006 *How Picturebooks Work*, I examine the impact of the visual medium, and the contracted perspective which is evident in many penguin picturebooks. I argue that, within the context of Antarctic children's literature, the penguin picturebooks offer a radical ecophilic depiction of the Antarctic, focusing on the landscape as a home space for their animal protagonists. I explore how ideas of home are constructed in these texts and argue that penguin picturebooks ask their child readers to reconsider established notions of home. Finally, I consider penguin picturebooks which are overtly didactic, aiming to encourage environmental awareness and engagement in their young readers. I analyse the functioning of time in these texts, and introduce the 'brink-time' chronontope. This chronotope is used to create a sense of uncertainty and urgency in relation to environmental concerns. My analysis demonstrates how important the relationship between time and space can be within ecopedagogical literature and the potential benefits of applying a similar chronotopic analysis to texts which highlight environmental issues for young readers.

Through these six chapters, I will demonstrate the central role children's literature plays in shaping and perpetuating cultural ideas about the Antarctic. The short description on the back of Francis Spufford's *Ice and the English Imagination* states "Everyone remembers the doomed Captain Oates's last words: 'I am just going outside, and I may be some time'" (1996, n.pag). For many people, the reason that they remember Captain Oates's last words, the tragic death of Scott, and the amazing survival of Shackleton, is because they read about it as children. Referencing the ubiquity of "Heroic Era" narratives within British culture, Geraldine McCaughrean noted "I seem always to have known the story of Scott and Oates" (pers. comm., January 16, 2016, see Appendix 3b). The stories written about the Antarctic for children have the power to shape how children view the Antarctic and perceive this history of human engagement with the space. Within Britain these representations have specific relevance because the British Antarctic Territories form the largest part of Britain's remaining Oversees Territories and Britain plays a vital role in decisions made about the continent through the Antarctic Treaty System. British authors have been writing about the landscape for children for over a century, and yet this body of literature, and the cultural representations of this unique continent for children, have never received significant critical attention. A key original contribution to knowledge provided by this thesis is the opening up of a new field of criticism focusing on Antarctic literature for children. This thesis outlines the dominant genres of writing about the Antarctic for children, and examines texts written over one hundred and twenty years, providing a vital insight into how authors have imagined the Antarctic. The broad chronological scope of the thesis allows for an analysis of the development of the field of Antarctic literature for children. The thesis demonstrates not only how authors have imagined and represented this unique landscape for child readers across the last century but also how the representation of this 'wild' landscape reflects fundamental ideas of home, heroism, and death.

Chapter One: Antarctic Whaling Literature for Children

In March 1857 Charles Dickens's *Household Words* magazine published an article entitled "A Whale in Whitechapel" about the exhibition of a large whale on the Mile End Road. The article noted that "The exhibition of whales has not been uncommon in this country", and went on to detail an event in Gloucester Green in 1834 in which a whale "weighing four hundred and forty thousand pounds; length one hundred and two feet; circumference seventy-five feet" was displayed, much to the delight of local children:

> One hundred and fifty-two children were within its mouth at one time […] Lucky it was for the hundred and fifty-two children that the Whale had no longer the power of shutting his jaws together for what a meal might be made of them like an ogre of old! (Buckland, 1857, p.275)

It was through travelling exhibitions such as those detailed in *Household Words*, and permanent exhibits at museums of natural history that the British public first got a glimpse of the world of whales and whalers. Whale catches reached unprecedented levels in the Antarctic in the early-to-mid-1900s and coincided with a growing public interest in whales and whaling, an interest which was reflected in the prominent whale galleries constructed in natural history museums all around the world. For children in London who wanted to stand near (if not directly inside) the world's largest mammal, the Natural History Museum in South Kensington offered a permanent site where they could come and gaze at huge whale skeletons and, from 1938 onwards, the blue whale replica in the Whale Hall.

Writing in 1933, as Antarctic whaling reached its height, and just before London's Natural History Museum unveiled the life-size replica of a blue whale in 1938, Otto Neurath, Viennese museum director and polymath, argued that whale exhibitions in natural history

museums were too far removed from the reality of human interaction with whales. Michelle Henning notes:

> Neurath reimagined a natural history museum […] Using the example of a whale exhibit, Neurath emphasized what people do with whales – how they hunt them, what goods they make from them (such as corset stays and soap), the economies that depend on them and the culture that emerges in relationship to them. (2006, p.78).

Neurath argued that "everything leads to men and society" (as cited in Henning, 2006, p.78) and wanted the whales to be displayed in the context of commercial whaling. He imagined whales being displayed alongside harpoons, products made from whale oil and blubber, and the stories of whalers. The literature of whaling is a literature which imagines whales just as Neurath wished them to be seen. These are stories which depict the intersection of man, nature, and commerce. Like the museum exhibits, these texts serve an educational purpose, teaching children about types of whales, their habitats, and habits, but the central focus remains on how whales might be used by man, the profit they represent and the struggle to reap economic reward from the ocean. These stories are fundamentally ecophobic. Simon Estok argues that, "Human history is a history of controlling the natural environment, […] of first imagining agency and intent in nature and then quashing that imagined agency and intent" (2009, p.210). In the whaling literature for children, the protagonists gain control of nature through killing the whale, which is made to represent the wild Antarctic landscape.

Antarctic whaling narratives for children also tell the story of the development and demise of a large-scale commercial industry in the most inaccessible landscape in the world. In this literature, we can see a particular way of envisioning Antarctic wilderness. Through looking at how the literature represents the Antarctic in terms of the commercial potential of the landscape, and the destruction of one wild element of this landscape (as represented by the

slaughter of the whales), this chapter offers an insight into an essentially pragmatic way of conceptualizing the wilderness of Antarctica for child readers. Arne Kalland in *Unveiling the Whale: Discourses on Whales and Whaling* (2009) argues that, in modern western society, whales exist in a metonymic relationship with nature, and with society itself; we see our relationship with whales as representative of our disregard for, and destruction of, nature. Similarly, Peter Stoett asserts that the whale has become "a symbolic fixture in contemporary western society, representing both natural magnificence and human folly" (1997, p.28). The human folly to which Stoett refers is the vast over-hunting of whales all around the world, which led many whale species to the brink of extinction. The Antarctic was the last hunting ground for large-scale commercial whalers. Technological advances enabled whaling to reach unprecedented levels in the Antarctic before rapidly declining whale populations caused widespread outrage and forced the International Whaling Commission to introduce quotas and eventually a moratorium, which came into effect in 1986. Many of these complex issues are evident in the children's whaling literature set in Antarctica. Even in texts written in the early 1900s, characters express disgust and sadness at the gruesome killing of the whales, while simultaneously celebrating their victory over wild nature. These contradictions betray the ambiguity with which we approach whales and whaling: at once impressed and horrified by our ability to conquer nature in its largest living form.

This chapter examines the earliest genres of Antarctic literature for children. There are six texts examined in detail and all of the texts take the form of prose fiction. All of the primary texts feature young male protagonists who enlist in whaling voyages. Sometimes the protagonists are orphans or leave their parents behind to enlist in the crew, or in some instances the protagonists are the children of whalers who are joining their father or other male parental figure on the whaling trip. These stories build on the wide history of sea literature, in particular whaling texts such as Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851). Some

texts even recreate the Moby Dick narrative in miniature, for example Alan Villiers's *Whalers of the Midnight Sun* (1934), which includes an episode centring on an 'unkillable' whale and an obsessed captain which results in the shipwreck of the young protagonists upon the Antarctic ice. The Antarctic setting of these texts differentiates from other whaling narratives, as the Antarctic features as a central element of all the texts and becomes a primary antagonist against which the protagonists must struggle. In texts published in the latter half of the twentieth century the landscape in fact eclipses the whales as the primary antagonist, as whaling methods improved allowing whalers to catch and process whales with relative ease. This chapter focuses on the impact of the Antarctic setting on whaling narratives for children, and how this early genre of Antarctic literature imagines the continent for child readers.

Many of these texts have been rediscovered through research at the British Library or museums such as the Whitby Museum which trace the histories of British whaling communities. For the most part, the texts examined in this chapter have received little or no critical attention. I first set children's whaling stories within the context of industrial whaling in the Antarctic and trace how these texts portray the conversion of wild nature into commercial profit. This chapter demonstrates how the whaling texts represent an ecophobic view of the Antarctic, establishing a combative relationship between their child protagonists and the natural world. I argue that, in these texts, the Antarctic seas represent a form of cornucopia for the whaling crews, a landscape of plenty which is available for human use and exploitation. I explore the tension that exists in the texts between the overtly capitalist approach to whales, and the obvious discomfort displayed by the protagonists and narrators. Finally, I analyse the function of the stories as bildungsroman. Many of the texts take the form of coming-of-age narratives, as young male protagonists seek to achieve adult status to join the hyper-masculine world of whalers. I explore how physical suffering is connected with growth within these stories and utilise Bakhtin's theory of chronotope to scrutinise how time

and space come together to instigate significant changes for the child protagonists in the whaling narratives.

Commodifying Nature

The size and destructive potential of the whale would seem to make it an unlikely prey for hunters, yet whaling became a vast industry practiced by nations all over the world. The Inuit population in the Arctic were hunting whales long before southern European nations began to venture farther into icy northern waters searching for whales.[3] In Europe, whaling was first established on a large scale by Basque communities in northern Spain. The Basque whalers discovered, through trial and error, that some species of whale were too fast to hunt, and some sank when killed. They named the northern "right" whale based on the ease with which it was killed (these whales tended to stay near the shoreline and would often approach ships – removing the necessity for lengthy searching or chasing), and its tendency to float when dead, allowing whalers to strip meat and blubber from the large carcass (Greenberg, 2003, p.16). Whaling practices developed in many coastal areas and the techniques improved with time, allowing a greater variety of whales to be caught and killed.

British whaling fleets formed an important part of the Antarctic whaling industry and the British ownership of sub-Antarctic islands ensured that even whaling activities undertaken by other nations produced profit for the Empire. Commercial whaling in the Antarctic reached unparalleled levels, and the populations of many species of whales were drastically reduced. G.P. Glasby records: "It is believed that the population of blue whales in the Antarctic seas was reduced from some 150,000 whales in the 1930s, to between 5,000 and 10,000 by the late 1950s" (1990, p.253). The establishment of the International Whaling

[3] For a detailed history of the whaling trade see Tønnessen & Johnsen's *The History of Modern Whaling* (1982), (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press). See also, Arne Kalland's *Unveiling the Whale: Discourses on Whales and Whaling* (2009), (New York: Berghahn Books) which discusses the cultural history of whaling and contemporary anti-whaling rhetoric.

Commission after the Second World War aimed to monitor and control whaling levels, but the commission proved largely unwilling or unable to prevent continued over-whaling. Instead, improvements in technology allowed whaling companies to increase their catches to meet growing consumer demand for the products of whaling.

Two specific developments made at the start of the period of intense Antarctic whaling in the early twentieth century vastly increased the volume of whales which could be caught and processed. These developments turned individual ships into machines of consumption. Factory ships were introduced to Antarctic seas in the 1923-24 season by the Norwegian whaling pioneer Carl Larsen. These were large vessels that were outfitted with equipment for processing whales at sea, removing the need to tow the whales back to shore stations. Smaller 'chaser' vessels would be used to track and kill the whales which would then be brought back to the floating factory for processing. The ships hunted as if in a pack, tracking whales, killing them, rendering down the oil, and discarding the remains. In the first Antarctic hunting season of the German floating factory whaler, the *Walter Rau* (1937-38), the ship,

> processed 1,700 whales, from which it produced 18,246 tons of whale oil, 240 tons of sperm oil, 1,024 tons of meat meal, 104 tons of canned meat, 114 tons of frozen meat, 10 tons of meat extract, 5 tons of liver meal, 21.5 tons of blubber fibre and 11 tons of glands for medical experiments. (Egerton, 2008, p.166)

The whaling season in the Antarctic lasted only from November to March, meaning this one ship caught an average of 340 whales per month during the 1937-38 season. Each whale was seen as a composite of saleable elements, those un-saleable parts being discarded as useless.

The second development was the introduction of the stern slipway by the Norwegian whaler Captain Peter Sørlle. George Small records that in 1925 Captain Sørlle "fitted out a large factory ship, the *S.S. Lancing*, with a stern slipway: a long sloping ramp that led from a large hole in the stern up to the main deck" (1971, p.13). This enabled the whale carcass to be

"hauled up to the deck by a steam winch and flensed[4] even while the ship was on the open sea" (Small, 1971, p.13). Antarctic rorqual whales had previously presented a significant problem to whalers accustomed to hunting the northern 'right' and sperm whales, which floated when dead, and were slower and easier to catch. The rorquals typically sank when dead and the small whaling ships were unable to manage the huge weight and so valuable whale carcasses were lost, returning to the bottom of the ocean. The stern slipways designed by Sørlle ensured that the whales could be dragged on board for flensing. The ships could now literally consume the whales: following a successful hunt the whales were dragged bodily on board through the gaping mouth of the ship (the stern slipway), whereon the crew of the whaler descended upon the catch and stripped the body of all useful elements: blubber, baleen, meat and fibres. These valuable parts were then processed, the blubber 'tried out' (boiled down into oil) and stored in vast containers below decks. The remainder of the animal was cast back into the ocean, excreted from the ship. At the height of the Antarctic whaling era in the 1930s, when whale catches were high, the rotting carcasses of whales frequently washed up on the shores of the Antarctic whaling stations (Small, 1971, p.12).

With the introduction of margarine made from whale oil in the early twentieth century the purchasing public began to physically consume whale products at significantly higher levels than before. Decreasing whale catches in the northern whaling grounds and a waning demand for whale oil, as products such as gasoline and kerosene became increasingly popular, had driven the whaling industry into decline from the 1860s. However, the discovery of the Antarctic whale populations and the development of techniques such as the explosive harpoons, and steam-powered chaser boats which enabled whalers to catch fast-moving large rorqual whales, along with the rapidly expanding demand for margarine, created a booming Antarctic whaling industry. The First World War caused further increases in the price of

[4] The removal of blubber from the body of the whale.

whale oil. Margarine quickly became an important part of the European diet. David Egerton records that by 1930 whale-oil-based margarine represented between 30-50% of the European margarine consumption (2008, p.166). Charlotte Epstein further notes that in the lead-up to the Second World War there was strategic importance attached to whale oil and its use in weapons manufacturing. In addition to this, Epstein cites a report commissioned by the American Central Intelligence Agency which concluded that whale oil formed "a significant part of the U.K. food supply", this significance was reflected in the British government classification of whale oil along with meat and sugar in the category of "essential national defence commodities" (Epstein, 2008, p. 44).

The approach towards nature and animal lives which allowed the whaling industry to devastate whale populations and push many species of whales to the brink of extinction reflects a perspective wherein man is seen as the natural master of nature and "nature ceases to have any worth or meaning beyond that assigned to it by reason" (Garrard, 2004, p. 62). Greg Garrard notes that, by the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, philosophers including Descartes and Bacon promoted a view wherein, "Reason became the means to achieving total mastery over nature, now conceived as an enormous, soulless mechanism that worked according to knowable natural laws" (Garrard, 2004, p.62). Garrard cites Val Plumwood who maintains, "it is no coincidence that this view of nature took hold most strongly with the rise of capitalism, which needed to turn nature into a market commodity and resource without significant moral or social constraint on availability" (as cited in Garrard, 2004: 62). In the whaling texts for children nature is seen primarily as a "market commodity" and animals are viewed as an assemblage of valuable constituent parts, rather than living creatures whose lives have objective value. Man's technological abilities enabled the exploitation of nature within the Antarctic, and the whaling literature for children set in Antarctica describes and celebrates the changing technologies in Antarctic whaling and the

consumptive nature of the process of whaling. All of the texts are fundamentally concerned with whaling as a trade, with the process of converting the whales from wild animals into commodities, and the benefits of whaling to the British consumer.

Frank Bullen's 1909 *The Bitter South* describes early pre-industrial Antarctic whaling. Bullen's text follows Captain Ted and his two sons who have decided to follow their father into the whaling trade. In this text, the tools of whaling include harpoons and ropes, and the hunting scenes are chaotic and gruesome:

> Again and again a man slipped into the freezing sea, to be immediately dragged back by some shipmates and to resume as quickly his desperate assault. How long this desperate affray lasted none of them knew, but under the guiding eye of the skipper all their efforts gradually culminated in the lines from half a dozen well-planted irons (harpoons) being brought on board and secured, they noted that the ice was so far broked that they were able to heave the creatures alongside and get fluke ropes round all three of them before they began to sink. (Bullen, 1909, p.152-153)

The methods used in R.M. Ballantyne's *Fighting the Whales* (1915) are similarly rudimentary. Ballantyne describes whalers as being "like soldiers", and declares that they must "expect to risk their lives frequently" (p.97), but the whalers are fighting for private profit not for their nation, which Ballantyne makes explicit:

> Up to this time our voyage had gone prosperously. We had caught so many fish that half our cargo was already completed, and if we should be as lucky the remainder of the voyage, we should be able to return home to Old England much sooner than we expected. (p.97)

In the title of his text, Ballantyne situates whaling as a battle against a fearsome foe, but passages such as these demonstrate that whaling is also a business venture, with investors eagerly awaiting the return of the ship to learn if the voyage has been suitably prosperous.

There is a distinctive shift in whaling texts from the 1930s onwards, as the trade became increasingly industrialised. Where Bullen's *The Bitter South* describes the crew desperately attacking whales with harpoons and struggling to drag the carcasses in by hand using only rope, later texts describe a process that has become mechanised and considerably safer, but which, in the process, has lost some of the Romantic extremes of early whaling. In texts written in the 1930s and later there is a focus on the large-scale industrialised processes of whaling. These texts still glorify whaling, and situate the whaling voyages as battles between man and nature, but there is an increasing acknowledgement within the texts that these are battles man will nearly always win. Allan Villiers 1934 *Whalers of the Midnight Sun* describes the first journey of a Norwegian factory ship into Antarctic waters. Whaling is certainly glorified in this and other texts from the 1930s onwards, but the authors also provide a frank appraisal of the economic motives behind whaling for their young readers. Like many young characters in whaling narratives, Villiers' young protagonists come from economically-deprived backgrounds and the opportunity of employment is a key incentive for their desire to join the whaling crew. Villiers describes the whales as "profit-giving" and creates a picture of a species pursued relentlessly all over the world:

> Hunted so long in the northern hemisphere, the profit-giving whales had departed or thinned out so much that their commercial hunting there was no longer possible. Whaling by modern methods – with canon and bomb-headed harpoon – had become too important to Norway to be given up merely because the whales had left the Northern waters. Wherever they went they had to be found, and hunted, and converted into rich oil. (1934: 11)

Norway is singled out by Villiers as a world-leader in the whaling industry, but many nations, including Britain, were heavily invested in the whaling industry, and determined to capitalise on the whale populations in the Antarctic. The word "converted" here signifies the economic transaction inherent in whaling, as living creatures come to symbolise only their economic potential. The modern whaling methods which Villiers references simplified this conversion, and facilitated whaling on a vast scale. Arthur Catherall's 1939 *Vanished Whaler* describes the introduction of aircraft to whaling fleets as methods became increasingly technologically advanced in the late 1930s. The protagonists are two young British pilots who act as spotters for the whaling ships below. Catherall describes the process by which the whalers in the factory ship created valuable oil from the whale carcass: "Her single funnel belched smoke, and from her "trying out" furnaces, where whale blubber was reduced to oil, came a continual grumbling roar which echoed and re-echoed from the glittering icy pinnacles of the island" (1939, p.11). Where in Villiers's text the living whales are reduced to commodities, in Catherall's text the ship is anthropomorphised belching, 'grumbling' and roaring. The ships have become the centres of life and activity for the continent, replacing the animal communities that are being hunted. The processes of industrialisation which transformed the home landscapes of Britain can be seen transforming the Antarctic in these texts, as sub-Antarctic islands, and the ocean itself, plays host to the large factories and growing numbers of workers involved in the rapidly expanding industry and humans and machines replace the whales and seals which once populated the seascapes around the Antarctic.

Written in 1966, James Vance Marshall's *My Boy John that Went to Sea* reflects some of the latter years of Antarctic whaling, including quotas for whale catches and fleets of catcher ships. This text reveals the increased efficiency with which whales were being hunted in the Antarctic. References to quotas indicate declining whale populations, and cause an inversion of the predator/prey relationship which was set up in early whaling narratives

where the men are depicted as vulnerable victims of the monstrous whales. Vance Marshall depicts the moral dilemma which developed as it became increasingly clear that whalers in the Antarctic were (perhaps permanently) destroying whale populations in the area. Captain Larsen, whose name clearly echoes the whaling pioneer Carl Larsen, justifies his continued pursuit of Antarctic whales by focusing on the vital products that the whales will provide:

> Larsen had been whaling twenty-six years, but still with every kill came the stab of pity; still, after each harpooning, he had to remind himself that the whale's death was not an end but a beginning: that out of each carcass, like sweetness out of the strong, came forth so many pounds of margarine, so many packets of detergent, bars of soap, bottles of lubricant and blocks of cattle-food … and so many tons of frozen meat to save the children of the East from death through malnutrition. (Vance Marshall, 1966, p.43)

This is a defence of whaling which connects the actions of whalers directly to the British dinner table and demonstrates the reliance of British consumers on the products of whaling. Vance Marshall also includes a biblical reference "like sweetness out of the strong" to liken the hunting of whales to Samson's destruction of the lion in the bible (Judges, 14:14, The New King James Version). In this bible passage, Samson kills a lion, and when he later returns to the carcass he sees that bees have created a hive in the remains, and he takes honey from the hive back to his family. The passage represents the Judeo-Christian "ambivalence" towards wilderness which Greg Garrard has described (2004, p.63), as the bee, the more domestic animal, profits from the destruction of the lion, a representation of wild nature which has been subdued, and man then profits from the work of the bee. The whale, like the lion, represents a fearsome form of wild nature, and the products made from whale oil or meat are the righteous benefits of man's victory over this form of wild nature. The last function in Vance Marshall's list, to feed starving children, is a reminder to the child reader

that children are key consumers of whale products. It also acts as a moral rejoinder to the criticism of the whaling industry, reminding critics that the loss of animal lives serves to save human lives in countries still suffering from the devastating effects of the Second World War. In the aftermath of the Second World War amid continued shortages of food and rationing, whale meat was proposed as a viable meat replacement for British consumers:

> wasted meat generated by pre-war whaling now seemed indeed unacceptable to a hungry and rationed war-torn world. Upon resuming whaling, British whalers, seeing the success of whale meat in Japan, sought to launch it on the British markets in 1947, through a concerted effort with the government […] Amid a minor blaze of publicity, Food Minister John Strachey waxed eloquent about the 600,000 tons of wasted quality meat, while a Dr Edith Summerskill educated the British public to the virtues of whale meat. (Epstein, 2008, p.42)

Vance Marshall's text is an interesting addition to the genre, published when the tide of public opinion was turning against whaling, and whale catches were rapidly decreasing. The whales themselves pose little threat to the whalers; the catching and killing of the whale is a relatively straightforward procedure. The *Petrel's* modern technology reduces any chance of escape for the blue whale being hunted. The primary action of this novel centres on the efforts of the crew to tow the dead whale back to the factory ship for processing. The dead blue whale, variously attacked by the weather and a swarm of killer whales, could be seen to represent the whaling industry itself: decaying, being artificially propped up, while also being attacked from all sides.

Horror and Awe

Just as wild landscapes such as the Antarctic were at first considered terrible, awe-inspiring, and sublime (Cosgrove 1984; Schama 1995), so too the whale was once considered to be both

frightening and awe-inspiring. This perception of the whale is evident in early texts such as Bullen's *The Bitter South* and Ballantyne's *Fighting the Whales*, published in 1909 and 1915 respectively. The shift in cultural perceptions of wilderness, which has resulted in wild landscapes being venerated, can also be seen in the perception of whales, which are no longer viewed with hostility or considered frightening but instead are seen as unique and vulnerable animals in need of human protection. This shift in perceptions of whales occurred primarily in the twentieth century, and can be seen in the whaling texts examined here. Even in those very early texts there is a discomfort expressed in relation to the practice of whaling. The protagonists frequently express disgust and horror at the realities of whaling, this becomes increasingly prominent in texts published later in the twentieth century. Ballantyne's *Fighting the Whales* clearly positions whaling as an epic battle between man and whale, and his tale includes death and near-death experiences of men during the fight. However, the protagonist also expresses regret saying, "I felt almost as if I were a murderer, and that the Creator would call me to account for taking part in the destruction of one of His grandest living creatures" (1915, p.95). In so much of this text the whale is seen not as an experiencing individual but as a source of profit, but by situating himself as a "murderer" the protagonist draws a moral equivalency between the act of killing a person and killing a whale. This is qualified by the phrase "almost as if" but this introduces doubt into a world-view in which whales are simply another natural resource which are available to be exploited by man.

In addition to hesitations about the morality of whaling, many texts include protagonists who express disgust at the physical dismemberment of the whale and the conversion of the animal into commercial product. Bullen writes: "it was an almost appalling scene that his eyes rested upon whichever way he turned then. He stood in the midst of a mass of blubber so piled that movement was out of the question" (1909, p.155). Alan Villiers' 1934 *Whalers of the Midnight Sun* goes farther than the earlier texts to question the psychological consequences of

whaling. When a blubber-cutter is killed by a falling flensing knife a young mess boy is driven to madness:

> One of the little mess boys from the rookery aft where the engine-room gang lived went crazy at the sight, shrieking, "he's dead now! Try him out; boil him down, too! Boil him down! Boil him do-o-o-own!" and his voice rose in a mad screaming. (Villiers, 1934: 239)

Villiers illustrates that it is not just the whales that are sacrificed for profit, humans, too, have been lost for the commodification of nature. Having seen so many living things killed and turned into product, the young mess boy's response to the loss of his colleague is to treat this death as yet another opportunity to create valuable oil, screaming "boil him down", until he can be subdued by his friends. Here, the toll on the young boys and men involved in whaling becomes clear through the death of the blubber-cutter, and the psychological breakdown of the mess boy who can no longer cope with being constantly surrounded by death. The reference to the mess boy as "one of the *little* mess boys" (emphasis added) highlights the youth and vulnerability of the children involved in whaling voyages and the potential damage done to these children through exposure to suffering and death. Of the texts examined here, Villiers is the most forthright about the horror of whaling. Written at the very height of Antarctic whaling, before the outbreak of the Second World War, Villiers captures the industry nearing its most destructive period and depicts the animal and human cost of whaling. There is an implicit critique of the whaling industry in scenes such as the break-down of the mess boy. However this critique is tempered by his central narrative which features young protagonists who benefit economically and personally from joining the whaling crew. Villiers's protagonists are depicted as resilient, they are among the group who will prosper, while the mess boy is among those who are shown to be unable to cope with the brutality of life aboard a whaler. *Whalers of the Midnight Sun*, then, offers a complex look at

the whaling trade presenting both the economic and social benefits and the psychological toll of whaling on young crew members.

Vance Marshall's *My Boy John that Went to Sea*, written in 1966 at the close of the era of Antarctic whaling, captures the beginning of the end of the whaling industry and shows the new generation's distaste for the profession. The prime motivation of the crew is economic. They are attempting to win a bonus for securing 200 whales. The narrative opens when the crew have already secured 199 whales, and have only one chase left before the bonus of £2,000 is secured. While Captain Larsen seeks to justify the slaughter by considering "the children of the East" (p.43) who will be saved by the provision of whale meat, his young son, John, has a more critical attitude towards the whaling trade. John is representative of the changing public perception of whaling. He fails to see the valour in whaling at the opening of the novel and his father cannot find a way to make the young man understand the draw of his profession:

> He could tell the boy of Antarctica's beauty…Or he could tell him of the comradeship of life in a whalecatcher: fifteen men, all of one company, fighting the storms, the cold and the whales. But the boy was beside him. If he didn't see the beauty, if he didn't feel the comradeship, what was the use of words?' (p.34)

John instead wants to be a musician – a choice totally in opposition to his father's profession, with its focus on individual talent, and in the safety and domesticity that a career on land promises. Throughout the novel John struggles with the two very different options for his future. In spite of the complexity of the relationships carefully plotted by Vance Marshall, and the progressive view represented by John, the ending of the novel is very conservative. John experiences the trials of the Antarctic, and is forced to choose between the safety of the men and his future as a musician. He chooses safety, and through this choice he feels, for the first time, welcomed into the crew as an equal. He discards his former desire to be a musician

to become a fully-fledged member of the whaling crew. The ending undermines many of the earlier sections which outlined the contemporary rejection of the trade of whaling, and is ultimately a celebration of a traditional image of masculinity, and the traditional values which this industry is made to represent within the narrative, such as the value of hard-work and the importance of homosocial bonds.

As the most recent text examined here, *My Boy John* most clearly depicts the changing social perception of whaling. The central protagonist, John, struggles to understand and become part of the whaling community, and is described as being "violently sick" the first time he witnesses the death of a whale (1966, p.18). Even Captain Larsen expresses regret at the fate of the whales ruminating that "only an hour before, the blue had been lord of the seas, the mightiest and gentlest of created creatures […] now he was smashed and bleeding upside down" (p.43). Written 51 years after Ballantyne's *Fighting the Whales*, this text includes the same doubts or questions about the morality of whaling, but these doubts are enhanced and are not balanced by exciting descriptions of battles between the whales and the men. Instead, this text shifts the focus on to the battle between man and the natural environment. The text, at first, seems to be critical of the ecophobic attitudes inherent in the whaling trade and in previous whaling texts, with the young protagonist voicing the disgust of new generations at the out-dated practices and the destruction of nature. However, the text can be seen simply to reframe the focus of the ecophobia. In previous texts, the whale and the landscape together represented the hostile nature to be overcome. In this text, the whale has lost its fearsome reputation and is simply a pitiable animal whose death is necessary to provide products and profit. It is the landscape and the environment which presents the danger and the threat, and against which the whalers battle. In this way, *My Boy John* can be seen to perpetuate the ecophobic attitudes towards the Antarctic that are so evident in the earlier texts. In all of the whaling narratives, it is the extreme Antarctic setting that continues to render whaling

glorious and impressive, even as technological advances increasingly tip the scales in the favour of the human attackers, undermining the previously fearsome power of the whales. Any awe that the stories encourage readers to feel towards the landscape is inevitably in the service of glorifying the protagonists and their trade and celebrating the human ability to control and 'conquer' wild nature and wild animals.

The Antarctic as Cornucopia

The Antarctic in whaling narratives is a place that is full: full of economic potential, full of life, and full of competition. This is remarkable because Antarctic literature is filled with descriptions of the landscape as vast, empty, and barren: from Coleridge's mariner who floats alone through an eerily still ocean when the rest of his crew is mysteriously struck down, to exploration narratives which depict explorers travelling alone through a desolate wilderness. The continent's depiction as a blank space, a *terra nullis*, onto which authors could project their own ideas about the continent is referenced in the title of Bill Manhire's 2004 text *The Wide White Page*. Elizabeth Leane refers to the concept of "the continent as canvas" and writes "it is nothingness, and nothingness cannot, by definition, be depicted" (2012, p.1). In contrast, whaling literature for children presents the Antarctic seascape as a kind of land of plenty that sustains a vast industry. At the height of Antarctic whaling there was an annual population of around 6,000 whalers at work in the icy waters (Tønnessen & Johnsen, 1982, p.277). By the time large-scale commercial whaling began in Antarctica this seascape was, in fact, the only remaining place on earth that was full of whales; in these narratives, it is the rest of the world that is empty.

In Bullen's *The Bitter South* (1909) when Captain Ted and his sons first land in Antarctica they come across an island densely populated with seals, which they quickly begin

to kill and skin. When the *Pelagos* first lands at a small sub-Antarctic island in Alan Villiers's 1934 *Whalers of the Midnight Sun*, the picture is of a place full of various wildlife:

> And it was a gloriously happy Alfie who scampered around rocks and climbed up precipitous cliff-faces after penguin eggs and young penguins and all kinds of things for the doctor and the museums; and afterward played around the beach talking with the sea-elephants and the penguins there. He stroked the sea-elephants (that was what the big sea slugs were called) on their soft noses and laughed at them when they roared fiercely at him. (p.55)

The sub-Antarctic islands are abundant playgrounds for Alfie and provide informal educational opportunities for a child who had actively avoided official schooling in his home country. In addition to plentiful animal life, these texts portray the Antarctic as full of people too. Arthur Catherall's 1939 *Vanished Whaler* opens by establishing the busy atmosphere of the factory ship: "The whale factory-ship King Haakon was a hive of bustling activity. She lay at anchor under the icy cliffs of the Balleny Islands, one hundred miles inside the Antarctic Circle" (p.11). Catherall's Antarctic is full of technology as well as whalers and whales. Similarly, in Vance Marshall's *My Boy John* we join the crew when they have already caught 199 whales. They are limited in their ability to catch whales only by the end of the season and IWC quotas, not by any lack of whales in the vicinity.

In these texts the landscape is positioned as a form of cornucopia; a fecund landscape which exists for the benefit of the whalers and those at home who will benefit from the many products of whaling. Greg Garrard (2004, p.19) identifies the "cornucopian" position as a viewpoint that is "not environmentalist at all" and which focuses on the abundance of natural resources and defends humanity's right to exploit these resources. In the context of contemporary environmental debates, cornucopians reject warnings about dwindling resources:

> The key positive claim put forward by cornucopians is that human welfare […] has demonstrably increased along with population, economic growth and technological progress. They point out that, in the long run, the supposed scarcity of natural resources is belied by falling prices of food, minerals and commodities relative to wages, as a specific resource becomes harder to obtain, the price increases, leading capitalist entrepreneurs to search for substitute sources, processes or materials. (Garrard, 2004, p.19)

The idea of the natural world as a cornucopia negates any human responsibility to carefully manage resources or prevent overuse, or in the case of the Antarctic over-hunting of indigenous wildlife. John Stephens identifies three dominant 'textual representations of the natural world' within children's literature:

> The first of these continues to promote mastery over nature, whereby the natural world exists for the benefit of humanity and must be subordinated to its desires and needs. The second assumes or promotes an attitude of caring, wonder and understanding of the natural world, or an awareness of environmental issues. There is only a limited degree of embeddedness, however, and humans are positioned as outside of nature and as the source of value and meaning. The third perspective draws on a nature-associated position which has affinities with deep ecology: intrinsic value is ascribed to all living beings, and human beings are not attributed with any kind of privileged status. (2006, p.40)

The whaling literature falls into the first category identified by Stephens. The texts assume and promote a mastery over nature. Although the representation of the Antarctic as a form of cornucopia could be seen to undermine ecophobic depictions of the continent as a *terra nullis*, the cornucopic representations are also not ecophilic. They continue to position man in opposition to the natural world, and promote the rights of man to exploit natural resources.

The texts celebrate the abundance which exists in the Antarctic, particularly in the seascapes which are described as full of animal life, and a hive of human activity, but the animal life is given little value beyond its inherent value to man. The texts remain firmly human-centred, and the long-term impact of whaling on the Antarctic ecosystem is never given serious consideration.

However, there exists a paradox within many of the texts, for while they depict the Antarctic as a form of cornucopia, they simultaneously reinforce existing perceptions of the Antarctic as a barren wasteland. Bullen's *The Bitter South* is very explicit in drawing on the disappointments of previous visions of Antarctica:

> They were spurred on by an absolute if utterly illogical belief in the existence of a glorious realm, of a land which, beyond the belt of storms and thick-ribbed ice, held in its strong embrace treasures and their concomitant pleasures innumerable […] But alas! unlike other dreams of a similar character which have resulted in the vast enrichment and extended happiness of the world at large, the dreams of a Golden South have had no fruit whatever as affecting the happiness or well-being of the race. It is a land of death. (1909, p.14-15)

Bullen presents the Antarctic as an utter disappointment; where explorers dreamed of a 'glorious realm' filled with treasures, the Antarctic is here revealed as fruitless and lifeless. Similarly, *Vanished Whaler*, the same text which depicts the Antarctic as a land filled with technology and promise, also describes the landscape as "a world of deathly stillness, broken only by the sullen murmur of the sea, and by the occasional thunderous crash of a great berg calving" (1939, p.117). *Whalers of the Midnight Sun* also describes the Antarctic continent in terms which draw on the established images of the landscape as empty, and threatening:

> What a place it was! There was no life – no seal, no penguin, no spouting whales. All around the lifelessness of the whitened desolation was appalling to the

> imagination; the grim savagery of the sullen ice seemed brooding on this new invasion, as if the diabolic spirit of the place were saying, 'I am not done yet.' (Villiers, 1934, p.267)

The Antarctic landscape and the whales themselves appear connected here, as the landscape exacts retribution for the destruction of the animal so symbolic with nature. The iceberg "calving" in Catherall's narrative is a hollow and dangerous substitute for those whale calves and mothers destroyed by the whalers. The "diabolic spirit of the place" which chases Villiers' whalers can be seen as nature exacting its revenge. Written against the backdrop of rapidly decreasing whale populations, these narratives describe the draining of life from the Antarctic. The only indigenous inhabitants of the Antarctic (Antarctic wildlife) are systematically being killed and removed from the space and these texts describe just how this was accomplished. The bountiful wild nature as represented by the whales has been replaced by a stark wild nature which offers nothing but danger and death to the whalers. Many of these descriptions of the landscape as barren take place in sections of the text where the explorers first enter Antarctic waters, and are immediately struck by the unique environment, or when they venture (or are driven) closer to the mainland; in *Vanished Whaler* and *Whalers of the Midnight* Sun the landscape is described as a barren wasteland after the protagonists are shipwrecked and forced to take to the Antarctic ice. There is a definite distinction made in these texts between the Antarctic mainland and the Antarctic seas. Further, there is a distinction between the exterior of the continent and the unexplored interior, which is more commonly represented as barren, or, "a land of death". The sea and the exterior of the continent form a sort of liminal space, between the outside world and the Antarctic interior. The narratives operate in this liminal space, and it is a place that can at once be full of life and opportunity and yet still has the potential to be threatening, and appear barren. These narratives highlight the enduring power of the ecophobic image of the Antarctic as a barren

wilderness. Even in texts which are primarily concerned with the life which fills the landscape, the Antarctic as *terra nullis* still remains as a powerful motif throughout the texts.

Whaling Texts as Bildungsroman

Nick Lee in *Children and Society* (2001) argues that we see adults and children as fundamentally different, and that the core of this difference lies in the adult's position as a "human being" while the child is a "human becoming". Lee argues that "Children's lives and activities in the present are still envisaged, in the main, as a preparation for the future" (Lee, 2001, p.8). John Locke's foundational *Some Thoughts on Education* (1693) helped to establish this view of childhood and children. Locke recommended that the child become accustomed early to physical hardship to aid development into a productive adult (Locke, 1778, p.3-4). This connection between physical suffering and growth is evident within the Antarctic whaling texts written for children. These texts describe a modern rite of passage in which the child is sent into the wilderness and pushed to their limits to test their ability to join the adult community.

The Antarctic functions as the wilderness into which the protagonists must venture in order to complete the transition to manhood. Frank Bullen's 1909 *The Bitter South*, the title of which references the ordeal of the protagonists, provides a useful synopsis of the function of the whaling voyage as a rite of passage within this literature: "a time was speedily coming that would test these youngsters […] to the utmost – a time to search the manhood of the manliest" (p.123). The hyper-masculine trade of whaling and the wilderness of the Antarctic landscape combine to push the boys to the limit of their endurance. Many of the whaling texts examined here begin with separation as the child protagonists are removed from their families and familiar surroundings and sent into the wilderness. In these texts, the young men must demonstrate their ability to contend with, and conquer, wild nature (here in the form of

the whales and the environment) in order to gain entry into the adult male society of the ships. By killing the whale, and through demonstrating their ability to survive in the wild environment, the protagonists are proclaiming their dominance over wild nature. This ability to overcome wilderness in all its forms is a central part of the boys' transition to manhood. Wilderness and wild nature are the antagonists in these texts and the children must take a combative stance against nature in order to graduate to adulthood.

The texts highlight the unforgiving environment and the physical hardships such as bitter cold, harsh winds, exhaustion, and hunger, which must be endured as part of life on a whaler. In Bullen's *The Bitter South*, as soon as the boys arrive in Antarctic waters they are struck by a vicious storm: "The storm-wind growled and shrieked and bit, the tortured sea rose black and jagged, the lurid lightening quivered through the murky sky … and, worse than all, from her crew's point of view, it was bitterly, marrow-searchingly cold" (1909, p.104). Here the storm is imagined as an attack on the boat and the physical bodies of the whalers. The crew are encouraged "to settle down to that dogged endurance of the miseries of their lot which is often the only way to do anything at sea" (p.104). In Alan Villiers' *Whalers of the Midnight Sun*, the suffering of the two key protagonists begins as soon as Alfie, the youngest protagonist, catches sight of the ship:

> Alfie dived under a barricade, hid behind a stack of fruit and was running along the pier to a place of vantage when he was hit on the nose by a heaving-line thrown by a burly Norwegian [...] His nose bled a while. (1934, p.13)

Again, before the ship departs we are told that Alfie, "tripped over a ringbolt and slipped on the deck on his face" (p.13). It becomes apparent very early in this narrative that life aboard the whaler will include physical suffering for the young protagonists, but they willingly accept this suffering so that they might emulate the adult men in the whaling crew. As the narrative develops we see many instances of suffering for the other key protagonist, Alfie's

brother Ocker. At one point Ocker is knocked nearly unconscious by a falling piece of whale blubber. Thrown into the freezing Antarctic waters Ocker awakens: "He tried to speak but the words would not come. His mouth seemed filled with something; his throat burned, and his tongue was abominably parched. His lips were swollen; his gums hurt. There was no feeling in his left arm, nor in his feet" (p.115). Later, Ocker is stranded on the Antarctic ice after his small chaser boat is sunk by an 'unkillable whale' in a miniaturised version of the *Moby Dick* narrative. Stranded in the icy landscape, he and his crewmates are forced to march for days with no food and inappropriate clothing, in a sequence that clearly references early twentieth century "Heroic Era" Antarctic narratives:

> Their leg muscles ached abominably; their thighs ached; their hands hurt dreadfully with the cold; their stomachs began to gnaw with a sharp pain that grew and grew until they stumbled mechanically on, one behind the other, blindly, dazedly, painfully, their whole minds numbed by the pain of the constant physical strain. (p.229)

The narrative dwells on lengthy descriptions of the suffering of the young protagonists. Not all who begin the rite of passage in this text can endure, after the final march we are told: "There were only eight of them, Einar the cook and two of the firemen had cracked up on that last hard march. One of them pitched down a crevasse; the others just – fell out of the line" (p.229). The failure of the other characters heightens the sense of achievement attached to the perseverance of the protagonists despite their considerable suffering. The protracted passages describing the suffering of the protagonists, and frequently also the deaths of minor child characters, which feature in the majority of whaling texts examined here can be seen to connect to a well-established tradition of romanticising child suffering and death in British children's literature. Amberyl Malkovich notes:

> Children's writers capitalized on images and ideas of disease, death and decay. Charles Dickens, George MacDonald, Charles Kingsley, Hesba Stretton, Christina Rossetti, and E. Nesbit all draw upon the romanticizing of the diseased, dying, and dead child in constructing the imperfect child character to illustration the transition space one must move through to attain a semblance of harmony. (Malkovich, 2013, pp.87-88).

Malkovich argues that the suffering of the child in Victorian literature is necessary "in order for them to realize a happy existence, whether it is through life of death." (p.88). Like the protagonists of prominent Victorian morality tales, such as Dickens's Little Nell, the child characters in whaling literature must endure extreme suffering to finally achieve a happy existence.

However, unlike the protagonists of Victorian moralising literature for children the young male protagonists of the whaling stories must learn to both endure and inflict suffering in order to join the adult community of whalers. In *The Bitter South* the two young protagonists are introduced to the world of killing early in their adventure. The narrator feigns reticence in describing the process of sealing only to offer a vivid description of the killing:

> I will only say that in the first four hours the armed crew, let loose upon the unsuspecting seals, slew and flayed an enormous number […] even the two lads were toiling with club and skinning knife like experienced hands. But to themselves they could not help confessing that, while there was something highly heroic and romantic in meeting the great cull-seal face to face and killing him […] there was nothing of the kind in dragging those same greasy piles over the rugged rocks and perhaps half a mile to the boiling down point. (1909, p.122-3)

Here inflicting and enduring pain coalesce in one act of violence. The "highly heroic" sealing combines slaughter, which is described almost like hand-to-hand combat, with the drudgery and hardship of physical labour. James Vance Marshall's *My Boy John* (1966), also combines inflicting and enduring suffering in the violent killing of the whales. The text describes John's struggles to understand and become part of the company of whalers, and for a time it seems as though he will not pass through the rite of passage to become the man his father, the whaling captain, hopes he might be. Vance Marshall writes:

> The boy's first shock had been the physical discomfort of life in a whalecatcher. He had been brought up mostly by his grandparents who, as is the way with grandparents the world over, had spoiled him […] he was unprepared too for the cruelty – the first time he saw a dying fin, cascading blood, dragged belly-up under the whalecatcher's bow he was violently sick. (p.18)

Eventually, through suffering and inflicting suffering on the whales, John comes to understand the importance of whaling. Notably, in these texts the young protagonists do not learn to love violence or to gain satisfaction through inflicting suffering on the wild animals they hunt. Instead what they learn is that this violence is a necessary part of life, specifically it is a necessary part of life as an adult male and in order to assume their full personhood and status as a man they must be able to endure and to inflict suffering. In this way, the texts are an introduction to the world of socially-accepted male violence. At the end of Vance Marshall's text, John, the budding young musician, has "a new-found sense of companionship … And it came to him, in a moment of surprise, that it might be possible for him to come back too, and be happy" (p.124). His dreams of an alternative life are set aside because "he could, now he was a man, look back on those dreams and recognise them for what they had been: the roseate hallucinations of a child" (p.125). The language that Vance Marshall uses here is significant. His ability to gain perspective and knowledge is located

specifically in his new status as “a man”. The language used in this section of the sentence is monosyllabic, simple and clear. In contrast, his former dreams are dismissively referred to as the “roseate hallucinations of a child”, implying that unlike the sensible male adult that he has become, the child John was delusional and impractical. The words used to describe his dreams to be a musician are polysyllabic reflecting the elaborate and artistic delusions of youth, which are explicitly connected with femininity in this text. Here, the child’s dreams are not something to be pursued and respected but something to be overcome through physically challenging, and often violent, rites of passage.

The whaling expedition as a rite of passage stimulates a transformation in the protagonists. The protagonists in all of these texts eventually complete the rite of passage and assume their traditional roles in society. The ‘two lads’ in Bullen’s text survive mutiny and shipwreck and the conclusion of the narrative sees them follow in their father’s footsteps as whalers. Villiers’s young protagonists are totally transformed by their experiences. We first meet the boys as they skip school and we soon learn that their prospects are decidedly grim. Ocker and Alfie “belonged to a family of sixteen of whom *so far* only two were in jail” (1934, p.13, emphasis added). Their experiences aboard the whaler transform these apparently misguided boys into productive young men. By the end of each narrative, the boys who began the novels as inexperienced children have graduated to masculine adulthood and have been welcomed into the whaling community.

The function of the land- and seascapes as the wilderness into which the young male protagonists must venture in order to complete their rite of passage and become men is central to the chronotope which dominates Antarctic whaling literature for children. This chronotope largely adheres to what Bakhtin describes as “biographical time”. Bakhtin describes the importance of “becoming” within biographical time arguing that, “A man’s entire youth is treated as nothing but a preliminary to his maturity” (1981, p.140). Antarctic

whaling stories for children are stories of becoming, of individual maturation and growth into male adulthood. The protagonists' movements through time and space in these narratives have a transformative effect on their entire being. They leave this landscape having experienced fundamental change to their identities. It is a distinctly linear chronotope, characters cannot return to the people they were prior to their transformation. Vance Marshall's John can only view his childhood dreams as "roseate hallucinations" and the new path that he charts for himself is markedly different than the one desired by his childhood self. The group of young protagonists in *Whalers of the Midnight Sun*, are similarly transformed, and we are told that several returned the following year as fully-fledged whalers. Their previous identities are left behind, rooted firmly in a past which is now largely inaccessible.

The transformation that is central to this chronotope is not just personal, or individual, it is evident to the entire community and results in a new-found status within the group. The transformations that occur are expected and they fall into a predetermined pattern. Bakhtin writes: "what governs from the outset is the whole of the character […] From the very first strokes (the first manifestations of character) the firm contours of the whole are already predetermined, and everything that comes later distributes itself within these already existing contours" (1981, p.142). In the whaling narratives, it is implied that through testing the boys' characters in this way, their 'true' adult self is revealed. The chronotope of the Antarctic whaling story is also clearly connected to what Maria Nikolajeva calls 'male time'. Nikolajeva writes: "Not only is male time linear, but male space is open, as books for boys take place outdoors, sometimes far away from home in the wide world. Male narrative time is structured as a series of stations where an adventure is experienced, a task performed, a trial passed" (1996, p.125). The Antarctic is these texts is a wilderness, a place that is explicitly 'not home' into which the young protagonists can venture in order to experience adventure

and trial. The action often expands continually outwards in the narratives, through time and space, as in Villiers' *Whalers of the Midnight Sun*, when the boys are shipwrecked and forced to travel through the wide-open spaces of the Antarctic continent. Nikolajeva also identifies the central linear movement in 'male time':

> The male chronotope is determined by the basic premise of the genre, that is, the protagonist's primarily superficial maturation. Male time involves a relatively simple evolution: a child grows up or an adolescent becomes sexually mature in a movement from birth to death. (1996, p.125)

The chronotope in the whaling narratives situates childhood as a defined period with a specific identifiable end point, and implies a substantive (rather than perfunctory) change in the movement from child to adult. It connects growth with time spent within a specific site, wherein the protagonists are challenged and must overcome these challenges in order to grow and this growth is represented as irreversible and ultimately positive. All of the child characters in the whaling narratives experience significant growth through their time in the Antarctic and their development into productive adults is represented as a positive progression.

There is, however, a secondary cyclical chronotope which is implied in the children's whaling texts. Having achieved the status of adult, and membership of the whaling crew, the protagonists' lives will shift from a relentless linear movement towards adulthood, into a cyclical pattern of, departure → voyage → return. This cyclical pattern will only be broken through death during a whaling voyage, or through a disruptive event which causes the men to give up the practice of whaling (including personal events such as an accident or illness, or societal events such as the moratorium on whaling introduced in 1986). There is also a broader cyclical pattern at play in the texts, as many of the protagonists are the sons and grandsons of whalers, and so by taking up the trade the generational cycle becomes mapped

onto individual lives. In many of the texts it is implied that this cyclical pattern will continue unimpeded, as fathers watch their sons graduate to fully-fledged whalers, completing the same spatio-temporal and developmental journeys they once experienced. *My Boy John* is different because of the external pressures on the industry that impinge on the central narrative, through references to quotas. Instead, in this text while the protagonist successfully moves through a linear chronotope, the whaling industry, too, appears to be moving towards a conclusion. This creates a complex temporal construction, in which the story is at once represented as a contemporary narrative about the lives of modern-day whalers, but is at the same time semi-historical, representing the dying days of a centuries old trade. The existence of multiple, sometimes conflicting, chronotopes creates what Bakhtin describes as dialogic "interillumination" within the texts, and across the genre. David Rudd argues that this kind of "heterochrony", "is the spatio-temporal equivalent of linguistic 'heteroglossia' and is evident in many of the generically hybrid works of children's fiction being produced today" (2010, p.157). Rudd is specifically referencing critically-acclaimed 21st-century texts such as Pullman's *His Dark Materials* Trilogy. What is perhaps remarkable is that it is possible to identify this kind of 'heterochrony' in texts written in the early-to-mid twentieth century. Moreover, a chronotopic analysis of whaling narratives helps to elucidate how subtly complex these texts are, despite their apparent adherence to the conventional structures of the bildungsroman.

Conclusion

Full-scale Antarctic whaling was relatively short lived, primarily taking place between 1900 and 1986 when the moratorium came into effect. The whaling texts for children written during the height of Antarctic whaling narrate a period of intense change in the continent, and offer a specific way of seeing and representing the Antarctic, focusing on the economic

potential of the landscape and the ways that humans have 'consumed' the Antarctic. The depictions of the Antarctic seascape as a kind of cornucopia, which sit side-by-side with descriptions of the continent and Antarctic seas as barren wildernesses, shows the variety of forms that ecophobic representations of the landscape can take. While these two perspectives seem contradictory, they both position the human in the centre of the frame, and perpetuate a combative relationship between humans and the environment.

Read today, the whaling literature of Villiers, Bullen, Catherall, Vance Marshall and others reflects an industry and practice now outlawed and widely maligned. Modern texts featuring whales and whaling take a markedly different attitude to whales and the wild nature of the Antarctic and current writing that features whales or whaling is usually pointedly anti-whaling. In *Unveiling the Whale* (2009, p.98), Arne Kalland describes contemporary fiction featuring whales, noting, "In many of the books people and cetaceans – popularly dolphins – collaborate, but where they do not, the whales are the heroes". A bibliography of literature featuring whales, compiled by Trisha Lamb Feuerstein, also illustrates the shift in attitudes towards whaling. Feuerstein lists texts such as Deborah Evans-Smith, *The Whale's Tale* (1986), which tells the story of a whaling ship caught in a severe storm which is saved by a whale, on the condition that they will no longer hunt and kill whales. The popular view of whales has changed considerably to the point where whales are no longer regarded as commercial product but are instead sentient natural wonders which must be protected.

However, while whaling narratives reflect an obsolete industry, and a perspective on whales and the Antarctic environment which is now seen as out-dated, I argue that there is ecopedagogical potential in these stories. Antarctic whaling was a huge industry and it was in the Antarctic that technological advances allowed for the slaughter of whales on a scale never before realised in the long history of whaling. The Antarctic is often associated with scientific research and with exploration, but for the greater part of the twentieth century the majority of

humans who went south went as whalers, not explorers or scientists. The whaling stories for children include detailed descriptions of the wholescale slaughter of animals in the Antarctic and depict the impact of industrialisation and the vast amount of waste produced by the whaling expeditions. Importantly, they also include child protagonists, demonstrating that children are not always simply bystanders, but have been active agents in the destruction of Antarctic wildlife. The ecopedagogical potential of these texts lie in the fact that they do not shy away from showing the brutal realities of whaling, Read in conjunction with histories of whaling in the Antarctic, these texts could offer a valuable insight into the complex history of human engagement with the continent and the continuing responsibility, particularly of nations such as Britain which profited significantly from this industry, to work to counteract the damage done to the wildlife and environment during the height of Antarctic whaling.

The history of whaling also altered the physical landscape of the Antarctic and these stories describe the towns and communities which developed in the Antarctic in the early part of the twentieth century. The remains of the whaling stations can still be found in sub-Antarctic islands such as South Georgia, as seen in the images below. In some areas animals have retaken the landscape, however the spaces are filled with the detritus of former human inhabitants. The Antarctic is frequently described as one of the world's last great wildernesses, and yet, here in the Sub-Antarctic islands, there has been little or no effort to remove the dilapidated buildings which still litter the island landscapes.

It is also notable that Antarctic whaling narratives for children are one of the few genres of Antarctic literature written for a child audience that contain primarily child protagonists. The whaling narratives are fictionalised stories which reflect the real experiences of child whalers who were brought to the Antarctic as part of whaling crews in the early twentieth century. In contrast, the "Heroic Era" narratives written for children almost entirely efface the

presence of children within this landscape, in order to reimagine the continent as a landscape where men can prove their masculinity and complete heroic acts of endurance.

Chapter Two: Robert F. Scott's Last Expedition

In 1910, J. Kennedy Maclean published *Heroes of the Polar Seas: a record of the exploration in the Arctic and Antarctic seas,* a work for children in which he celebrates the bravery and heroism of Arctic explorers and describes the first tentative expeditions within the Antarctic continent. In the opening pages of the text, Kennedy Maclean positions the Antarctic as the Arctic's poor relation. For him, the stories about Antarctic adventure were, "lacking in those elements which give colour and life to the voyages in the Arctic seas. No expedition has ever come to grief as did Franklin's party, and the bones of no gallant crew have been left to bleach on the icy desert" (1910, p.302). In talking about Arctic exploration however, Kennedy Maclean was effusive:

> Heroism, glorious and undaunted even in death, and tragedy, grim and terrible, are twin-brothers throughout the whole of the long and weary struggle, the record of which is more romantic and wonderful than anything else which the brain of the fiction writer has ever conceived. (p.302)

Kennedy Maclean's text was published just as Robert Falcon Scott departed for his second Antarctic expedition aboard the *Terra Nova*. Within two years of the publication of *Heroes of the Polar Seas* the deaths of Scott and his four companions on their return from the South Pole provided the "grim and terrible" tragedy necessary to convert Antarctic exploration into a heroic pursuit and transform the Antarctic landscape into an appropriate arena for heroic endeavour and sacrifice. The combination of heroism and tragedy, that made the Arctic narratives so "romantic and wonderful" for Kennedy Maclean, was abundant in the story of Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition, and helped ensure that the story became a foundational Antarctic narrative, one which has had a significant influence on the literature written about the continent in the years following the *Terra Nova* disaster.

Scott's expedition was part of the so-called "Heroic Era" of Antarctic exploration. By the time Gordon Hayes coined the term "Heroic Era" in his 1936 book *The Conquest of the South Pole*, the vocabulary he used to describe the exploration of Antarctica was already commonplace in discussions of this period and Gordon Hayes was largely reflecting, rather than shaping, public opinion. Gordon Hayes specifically linked the heroic nature of the expeditions with the physical suffering and deaths experienced in the Antarctic, and in doing so, mirrors Kennedy Maclean's celebration of the "romance and wonder" of the deadly Arctic expeditions. This connection between heroism and death – particularly the idea of a good death – is one which is apparent in many of the re-writings of the *Terra Nova* narrative for children and will be further explored throughout this chapter.

"Heroic Era" narratives are the dominant genre of literature about the Antarctic written for children in Britain, in terms of both the longevity of the genre and the number of texts published. For over 100 years, writers have rewritten and reimagined the stories of the "Heroic Era" explorers for readers both young and old. These accounts detail the early expeditions that ventured into the heart of the Antarctic to search for the South Pole, to break records, or discover new lands in the continent. Undoubtedly, the two best-represented Antarctic explorers in British literature for children are Robert F. Scott and Ernest Shackleton. Both explorers died on an Antarctic expedition: Scott on the Great Ice Barrier, returning from the South Pole in 1912; Shackleton safe in his cabin aboard the *Quest* headed for the fourth time to the Antarctic in 1922. Scott took part in two Antarctic expeditions, Shackleton in four: however, it is Scott's last expedition that has endured as the most prominent Antarctic exploration narrative. This chapter will look specifically at retellings of Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition narrative while Chapter Three will focus on Shackleton and his *Endurance* expedition 1914-1916.

Robert F. Scott left England in 1910 aboard the *Terra Nova*, bound for his second Antarctic expedition. The expedition had two main goals: to gather scientific data on the Antarctic landscape, climate, and wildlife, and to reach the South Pole. For Scott, it was an opportunity to beat his one-time colleague and long-time rival, Ernest Shackleton, whose 1907-09 *Nimrod* expedition had reached within 100 miles of the pole. Scott's expedition suddenly found itself involved in a 'race to the pole' when the seasoned Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen announced that he had abandoned plans to head north to the Arctic, and would instead be heading south with the specific aim of sprinting for the pole. As Scott's large expedition team moved south the party was whittled down again and again until just five men set out on the final push for the pole. When the British contingent finally arrived at the South Pole, they found a Norwegian flag and the remnants of a victory that was over a month old. The men turned north and headed home, deflated, and depleted of energy and supplies. What followed was a harrowing journey and death. All five of the polar party died, the final three – Wilson, Bowers, and Scott – died a tantalising 11 miles from One Ton Camp which contained life-saving fuel and food. The shock of losing the entire polar party might have been enough to turn the events into a national tragedy, but it was Scott's journals, and his emotive 'Message to the Public' that ensured the story's endurance as myth as well as history. In the journals, Scott speaks from beyond the grave, detailing the physical decline and deaths of the five men, and positioning their endeavours as heroic failure. Scott's journals were first edited and published in 1913 and have remained in print ever since. These journals have shaped how the story of Scott's last expedition is understood and retold for both adult and child audiences.

As the dominant genre of stories written about the Antarctic for children, the "Heroic Era" narratives deserve, and even require, further critical attention than they have previously received. These are stories that recount some of the first human interactions with the interior

of the Antarctic continent, and that help to shape child readers' understanding of this unique landscape. This chapter interrogates the children's stories about Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition, including analysis of sixteen texts which include prose fiction and picturebooks. All of the primary texts examined in this chapter primarily retell, rather than rework or reconsider, the story of the *Terra Nova* expedition. The perception of the story as suitable educational material for children is evident in texts such as J.D. Hodder Williams's *Like English Gentlemen* (1913) which the author describes as "specially prepared for schools" (p.3). The role of the stories as educational material is clear in many more recent texts too through the inclusion of 'factoid' boxes, glossaries and maps. As the chapter will explore, there is a remarkable continuity among the retellings of the *Terra Nova* narrative over the past century. Authors writing in the early 1910s and 2010s retell the same incidents and structure their narratives in the same way.

This chapter explores the literary origins of Scott's own *Terra Nova* narrative and the connection between Scott's expedition diaries and the field of children's literature, specifically J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904). I interrogate the representations of gender in the texts including the image of heroic masculinity that is presented for the child reader and the feminisation of the Antarctic landscape. I introduce the "Heroic Era" chronotope, looking at how time functions in the *Terra Nova* narratives, and how the "Heroic Era" has impacted the functioning of time within Antarctic literature more generally. Finally, I explore the depiction of death, particularly the idea of good death, and how the children's authors draw on Scott's diaries and letters and make the death of the protagonist's central to their heroic legacy.

Uncritical Retellings: Children's *Terra Nova* Narratives

The British polar party that made the final push for the South Pole was comprised of five men: expedition leader Captain Robert Scott, Lieutenant Henry Robertson 'Birdie' Bowers,

Dr Edward Wilson, Seaman Edgar Evans and (Army) Captain Lawrence 'Titus' Oates. By the time the surviving three members of the polar party pitched their tent for the final time, Scott was the only member of the polar party still keeping a diary, and even as he lay dying, Scott continued to write. He wrote diary entries and letters to his wife, his friends, and his superiors. He also wrote his 'Message to the Public' which was widely published after his death. This 'Message' has formed the basis for many literary retellings of the expedition and is often quoted in the children's narratives of Scott's last expedition. Scott's 'Message' presents an ardent defence of himself and his men; he acknowledges failure and yet uses the language of victory to describe their efforts. Scott begins: "The causes of the disaster are not due to faulty organisation but to misfortune in all risks which had to be undertaken […] We fought these untoward events with a will and conquered, but it cut into our provision reserve" (2006, p.421). Scott specifically blames the Antarctic climate and terrain for the disaster. In addition to Scott's famous declaration, "Great God, this is an awful place" (p.376), he also specifically cites the "soft snow" and "weather throughout the journey" (p.376), as the central causes of the disaster. In doing so he creates an ecophobic depiction of the Antarctic, as a hostile force, against which the explorers have valiantly battled.

However, Scott also finds another place to lay the blame, Seaman Edgar Evans, the first man to die: "The advance party would have returned to the glacier in fine form and with surplus food, but for the astonishing failure of the man whom we had least expected to fail. Edgar Evans was thought the strongest man of the party" (2006, p.421). Scott's assessment of Evans is shockingly harsh; the words "astonishing failure" imply that his illness and death occurred unprovoked, and that he was, in fact, personally culpable. In reality, Evans had most likely been slowly starving to death for weeks before he collapsed. In *Antarctic Destinies: Scott, Shackleton and the Changing Face of Heroism* (2007) Stephanie Barczewski points to Evans's physical size as the cause of his collapse:

> At over 200 pounds, Evans was by far the largest member of the polar party, and therefore the most affected by the deficiency in rations. He required 300-500 more calories a day than did a man of Scott's size, around 160 pounds. In excellent physical condition with little fat to spare, he quickly started losing muscle mass. (p.77)

Evans's breakdown was positioned as a failure in character, rather than a manifestation of his body's inability to cope with huge physical strain combined with starvation rations in an unforgiving environment. Perhaps even more damning than Scott's reference to Evans "astonishing failure", was his comment: "Evans *was thought* the strongest man of the party" (2006, p.421, emphasis added). This implies that initial assessments had proven incorrect, and that in death he had demonstrated his inherent weakness rather than strength. This comment finds its opposite in Scott's description of Captain Oates's death which he describes in his diaries as "the act of a brave man and an English gentleman. We all hope to meet the end with a similar spirit, and assuredly the end is not far" (2006, p.410). Evans's is a death to be maligned; Oates's to be emulated. Thus, while the circumstances of the two deaths were relatively similar, the narrativization of these two deaths could not have been more different. Commentators, such as Barczewski, have identified the clear class bias in Scott's critiques of Evans. This becomes blatantly apparent in a comparison of the descriptions of both explorers' deaths. Evans, the only working-class member of the polar party, is criticised to the point of defamation, while Oates, a Captain in the army and from a wealthy family, is venerated as a hero. The severe criticism of Evans that Scott included in his diaries and particularly in the 'Message to the Public' had a significant impact on Evans's reputation in the years following the disaster. Even media in Evans's native Wales turned on the dead explorer. The *South Wales Echo* published an article on the 15th of February 1913 stating:

> It would seem that from what has escaped some of the survivors that the unfortunate man, Evans, lost his reason for the time being under the great stress of fatigue and privation, and was incapable of obeying orders or assisting his hard-pushed companions in the weary work of pulling the sledge. Indeed, it became necessary in the end to lay him on it. ("Ugly Rumours", 1913)

Stephanie Barczewski records that Evans was the only member of the polar party who did not receive a public memorial. Barczewski further argues that this lack of commemoration is directly connected to the criticisms levelled against Evans by Scott (2007, p.174).

At the end of his message, however, Scott leaves aside the assigning of blame in order to position the expedition as a heroic tragedy. With significant literary skill, Scott interweaves the rhetoric of nationalism and imperialism with that of self-sacrifice:

> We are weak, writing is difficult, but for my own sake I do not regret this journey which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past. (2006, p.422)

Scott positions the deaths of the men as 'the will of Providence'. He also draws on this connection between his own fate and God's will in his diary entry when he called upon his country to provide for the families of the deceased: "for God's sake look after our people" (p.412). Scott references God only six times in the first year of diary entries (Jones, 2006, p.xxxvi) and yet, in his last diary entry, and in his message to the public he repeatedly harnesses the emotional power of supplications to religious duty in order to manipulate his readers and induce them to support the families of the dead men. Scott was evidently aware of the power of narrative. He was particularly aware of the power that his words would have as messages from beyond the grave, and he exploited this power in order to shape the way that the public would perceive his expedition. He positioned his expedition as a heroic failure

and himself and his men as martyrs to science and imperialism, lost in an effort to explore the Antarctic wilderness and claim it for the British Empire.

The extensive diary entries and letters written by Scott throughout the expedition, and particularly in the last days of his life, enabled him to retain control over the way that his story would be told. Even beyond the point of his own death he was able to choreograph the presentation of the story to the British public. Unlike the Arctic expeditions such as that led by Sir John Franklin, there was no indigenous community in the Antarctic to add a counter-narrative to the account, so Scott and his companions were able entirely to control the way that their story would be reported. This authorial control has been largely allowed to transfer over unchecked into the literature for children written about the *Terra Nova* expedition. Scott is quoted at length in many of the children's texts which retell the story of the *Terra Nova*. This is equally true of texts written shortly after the news of the disaster broke in 1912, and stories written over one hundred years later. Texts such as J.E. Hodder Williams's 1913 *Like English Gentlemen*, Lewis Broad's 1936 'Five Men Versus the Antarctic', Philip Briggs's 1959 *Man of Antarctica: The Story of Captain Scott*, L. Du Garde Peach's 1963 *Captain Scott*, Catherine Charley's 2003 *Robert Scott and Roald Amundsen Raced for the South Pole*, Haydn Middleton's 2005 *Great Ice Race*, and Mike Gould's 2012 *Race to the Pole* all quote directly from Scott's diaries or letters. Together these texts represent nearly a century of continuity, as they all use Scott's diaries as their primary text for understanding and re-telling the *Terra Nova* narrative. The reliance on one perspective for information on the expedition is all the more unusual given the large number of first-hand accounts that were written about the expedition, some of them specifically tailored to a child audience, such as Lieutenant Edward 'Teddy' Evans's 1958 *Man of the White South: The Story of Captain Scott*[5]. It may have taken nearly fifty years for Evans's narrative for children to be published, however,

[5] By the time of the publication of Evans's text in 1958 he had become Admiral Lord Mountevans, and this is the name given to the author on the published text and included in the work cited below.

there were many more accounts which were available shortly after the expedition returned in 1912. Published accounts of the expedition include: Raymond Priestly's *Antarctic Adventure: Scott's Northern Party* (1914), Thomas Griffith Taylor's *With Scott: The Silver Lining* (1916), and photographer Herbert Ponting's *The Great White South* (1921). In more recent years, numerous other expedition diaries have also been published including those of Edward Wilson, the expedition doctor and member of the ill-fated polar party, Charles Wright, William Lashly, and Tryggve Gran, the Norwegian member of the British expedition. Apsley Cherry-Garrard's personal account, *The Worst Journey in the World* was published in 1922 and has come to be considered as a masterpiece in travel writing. Yet none of these texts have had any significant impact on the way that the expedition is positioned in children's retellings. Instead the focus remains firmly on Scott and his perspective. This is, perhaps, because the stories focus so intently on Scott to the exclusion of others who played vital roles in the expedition. The children's *Terra Nova* narratives are positioned largely as the heroic story of one man, or a very small group of men, and so all of the other perspectives provided by members of the wider party are ignored to craft a story of individual heroism. Notably, even in texts which supposedly tell the story of the race to the pole focusing on both Roald Amundsen and Robert Scott, there is still an obvious imbalance in the use of primary material with texts such as Catherine Charley's *Robert Scott and Roald Amundsen Raced for the South Pole* (2003), drawing heavily on Scott's diaries and neglecting those of the Norwegian party. Charley's bias in favour of Scott is evident even in her choice of title. Scott's greatest critic, Roland Huntford, also entitled his 1979 text, *Scott and Amundsen: Last Place on Earth* again choosing to list Scott before the Norwegian explorer. Through death, Scott achieved greater public prominence, ensuring that even his critics allow him priority in their published accounts of the 'race to the pole'. These titles are indicative of Scott's more prominent place within the cultural consciousness owing to his death and his posthumously published diaries.

The reliance on Scott's diaries and letters is notable, particularly among the more recent retellings of the *Terra Nova* expedition for children, published since Roland Huntford's excoriating assessment of Scott in his 1979 book. Huntford positioned Amundsen's success as the result of superior planning and he criticised Scott severely, effectively blaming him for the tragic conclusion of the expedition. This book caused a large-scale reassessment of the expedition and prompted significant controversy. In an article in *The Guardian* in 2010, John Grace wrote:

> It was hard to escape Captain Scott if you were a child growing up in Britain any time between the 1920s and the 1970s. He was the man who made the ultimate sacrifice on his return from the south pole; the man who achieved a greater nobility in coming second than his rival did in coming first; the man who embodied the noblest qualities of stoicism and suffering. In short, he was the quintessential British hero, the venerated subject of school assemblies everywhere. And then – almost overnight – the Scott myth ended in 1979 with the publication of Roland Huntford's book, *Scott and Amundsen*. For the first time, the British and Norwegian expeditions to the South Pole were forensically examined side by side and Scott was found seriously wanting. (Grace, 2010, n.pag)

As this chapter will demonstrate, the ideological indoctrination of British children in relation to Scott has continued in the post-Huntford period. Even those authors writing in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries remain steadfastly attached to the image of Scott as a heroic martyr. Some authors draw on recent works which have come to Scott's defence in order to justify their continued celebration of the explorer as hero. In 2003 explorer Ranulph Fiennes published a book entitled *Captain Scott* defending Scott's legacy and criticising Huntford. In 2001, Susan Solomon made a scientific defence of Scott's legacy by arguing

that temperatures during his return journey from the pole were abnormally lower than in previous years, bolstering Scott's claim to have been pinned down by a blizzard. Catherine Charley specifically references Solomon's work in her defence of Scott:

> Scott has been heavily criticized too for blaming all his misfortune on bad luck, and especially on the weather conditions. But a recent book by an experienced and senior Antarctic scientist, Susan Solomon, has supported his case. She states that data recorded over the years in Antarctica shows that the very low temperatures that Scott and his small team endured on their return to the Ross Ice Shelf were extremely unusual for the particular time of year […] Whatever criticisms have been thrown at both men, Scott and Amundsen were both great achievers in extreme conditions - no one can take that away from either of them. (2003, p.158-159)

Charley uses Solomon's work to defend Scott's failings and implies that the criticism that Scott and Amundsen have received has been largely equal, ignoring the fact that it is the British explorer who has been the recipient of the harshest critiques. Haydn Middleton focuses on the Norwegian's subterfuge in his defence of Scott: "When is a race not a race? When one of the teams doesn't know it's in a race! Scott's team sails from Britain in June 1910 with no idea that Amundsen's team will head south too" (2005, p.10). Like the contemporary commentators who criticised Amundsen for acting with poor-form, Middleton implies that the explorer's last-minute decision to head for the South Pole went against an unspoken code of practice. Charley and Middleton's works are representative of the majority of texts for children about Scott which seek to present a simple nationalistic narrative rather than represent the more complex understanding of Scott's legacy which has emerged in the literature for adults about the expedition. These kinds of representations have ensured that children's literature has remained a refuge for Scott's heroic reputation. Through allowing

Scott's diaries and letters to dominate the retellings, contemporary authors not only allow the story to remain focused on one man; they also perpetuate out-dated social views, particularly those relating to class. Scott's story largely focuses on the expedition officers. Only one seaman features significantly in the later diaries or in the letters and he is not singled out for acts of heroism but instead blamed for his "astonishing failure". Irish author Michael Smith has reworked the narrative through the eyes of the Irish sailor Tom Crean in his 2003 text, *Tom Crean: Ice Man*, which details Crean's early life and his role in Scott's Antarctic expeditions. However, there have been no similar reconsiderations of the role of Evans for child audiences in British children's literature. By continuing to directly quote Scott's diaries and letters, while often failing to quote other explorers such as Amundsen equally or at all, even in texts which are presented as being about the 'race to the pole' (rather than specifically about Scott's life), the children's texts persist in placing Scott and Scott's diaries at the centre of the narrative, therefore effacing the contributions of the wider crew, and failing to critique or counter Scott's defamatory comments about Edgar Evans.

In addition, through focusing on Scott as an individual, rather than the expedition as a whole, the texts omit any consideration of the expeditions as imperial ventures. Cultural geographer Klaus Dodds notes:

> a lack of indigenous human population [in the Antarctic] alongside a harsh climate and remote location may unwittingly contribute […] to a view either that Antarctica does not present a particularly complex or interesting case of the 'colonial condition' or that terms such as 'decolonisation' have no intellectual purchase here. (2006, p.60)

In his 2006 article "Postcolonial Antarctica" and his 2002 book *Pink Ice: Britain and the South Atlantic Empire*, Dodds convincingly argues that we *should* consider the Antarctic in the context of postcolonial studies. Dodds cites the use of imperial practices such as

"mapping, surveying, and the subjugation of territory and non-human populations" (2006, p.61). Despite the inability of early explorers to create permanent settlements, they still claimed, named, and surveyed the landscape. In doing so, they sought to know and control the Antarctic, and the imperialist expeditions of Britain can be understood as part of a larger imperial project wherein Britain sought to control vast areas of the globe and to claim the right to exploit both indigenous populations and natural resources. The imperial ambitions of the early expeditions are clear in Scott's own diaries, which list his interactions with the Royal Navy (in which he was a Captain), and the Royal Geographical Society, and his desire to claim the South Pole for the Empire. Contemporary children's texts avoid engaging with the imperial function of the expedition, preferring to focus on the heroism of a small group of individuals.

Robert Scott and Peter Pan: Intertextuality and Scott's *Terra Nova* Narrative

By the time Scott departed on the *Terra Nova* in 1910 bound for the Antarctic he was well aware that a successful explorer must also be a proficient author. As Max Jones writes:

> The production of a book was by now an essential part of any expedition. David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* sold 70,000 copies in the second half of the nineteenth century, while Fridtjof Nansen had received an advance of £10,000 from Constable for his account of the voyage of the *Fram* in the 1890s. (2006, p.xxiv)

There were clearly significant economic, as well as reputational, advantages in publishing a first-hand account of exploratory ventures. The early Antarctic expeditions also coincided with the peak in popularity of the adventure genre. This literature had a significant impact on the explorers, and specifically on Robert Scott who cited Robert Louis Stevenson among his favourite writers and who took *Treasure Island* (1883) on both the *Discovery* and *Terra Nova*

expeditions. Among the many lists of foodstuffs, sledding gear, and scientific equipment which were carefully compiled in advance of Scott's first Antarctic expedition aboard the *Discovery*, there is a detailed inventory of all the books which were taken with the explorers as they headed south (see Appendix 2). This inventory is 33 pages long and among the many volumes of historical and scientific works, biographies, and travel literature, there are also numerous works of adventure literature by authors such as Rudyard Kipling and Charles Kingsley. In addition to *Treasure Island*, several other works we would now consider classics of children's fiction were also taken on the expedition. This list includes: Kipling's *The Jungle Books* (1894), Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), and Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* (1855). The list also includes several Arctic and Antarctic adventure tales including three works by Frank Bullen (the same Frank Bullen who wrote several boys whaling narratives including the Antarctic tale, *The Bitter South*), such as his 1897 *Cruise of the Cachalot*. While it appears that no similar inventory was taken of the *Terra Nova* library, the written accounts of the expedition refer to the various books the explorers were reading and sharing. Many of the adventure stories which travelled south with the *Discovery* returned again in 1910 including Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and a large selection of works by Kipling (taken by Apsley Cherry Garrard). Philip Sidney writes that the "romance" (adventure) genre was the best represented genre among the books taken on Scott's second expedition (Sidney, 2011, p.63). The explorers surrounded themselves with adventure fiction and all of the ideals of masculinity that literature contains. The values they absorbed through these texts helped inform their own view of the Antarctic and their roles there. The narratives of the "Heroic Era" are populated by figures who are living out the boys' adventure fantasy; travelling to new lands and claiming them for the Empire, all the time proving their own masculinity, courage, and physical strength. Scott, the most prominent of all Antarctic explorers, carefully crafted his own adventure story.

As Scott set off on his own Antarctic adventures he took with him, both literally and figuratively, the adventure fiction that helped to inform his descriptions of the Antarctic and his expedition. Scott's diaries can therefore be viewed not as a personal record of his time in the Antarctic, but as draft copies of a pre-commissioned narrative for publication, structured more along the lines of a polar adventure narrative than a scientific account of the Antarctic climate or terrain. The children's texts published in the wake of the expedition, which drew so heavily on Scott's diaries and letters, are commonly positioned as non-fiction adventure stories that faithfully represent historical facts, and yet these diaries and letters were informed by classic children's texts such as *Treasure Island*. Given that Scott purposely wrote his diaries for later publication, and the obvious influence of literary sources, specifically children's texts, I argue that the children's retellings can be seen as intertextual works which retell the Scott myth, rather than as historical narratives.

One text that clearly influenced Scott was J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up* (1904). Barrie and Scott had become great friends in Scott's inter-expeditionary years. When Scott's son was born in 1909 he was named Peter after Barrie's most famous character, and Scott appointed Barrie as godfather. As he lay dying, Scott wrote to Barrie saying, "I never met a man in my life whom I more admired and loved than you" (as cited in Birkin & Goode, 2003, p.210). Barrie kept this letter written on "little flimsy sheets" with him for the rest of his life (Telfer, 2012, n.pag). Barrie's influence on Scott is most explicit in his account of the death of Lawrence 'Titus' Oates: "We knew that poor Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman. We all hope to meet the end with a similar spirit, and assuredly the end is not far" (Scott, 2006, p.410). Scott's description of Oates's death echoes the words of Wendy in J.M. Barrie's 1904 play *Peter Pan; or, the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, as the Lost Boys face death at the hands of Captain Hook, before they are miraculously

saved by Peter. In this scene, Wendy channels the boys' "real mothers" in order to inspire them to face death with honour: "We hope our sons will die like English Gentlemen" (Barrie, 2004, p.121). While Wendy channels the boys' mothers, for Scott it is the Lady Britannia who calls upon his crew to die with honour. Their good deaths are positioned as fulfilling their obligations to their expedition and their country. Through evoking Barrie, and this particular scene, Scott also subtly links his own men with the lovable protagonists of a popular work. In doing so, he infantilises the men, making their deaths seem all the more tragic. He is continuing the fictionalisation and mythologisation of his expedition, situating it within a literary fictional world, as well as within the broader history of British exploration.

As he wrote the words about Oates, Scott was among a group of men facing death far from home and separated from their families. Removed from the societies which give their ranks and titles meaning, and without their families, the explorers are like Pan's Lost Boys. Like the Lost Boys, these men turned to their upbringing in order to understand how to behave with decorum in this untenable situation. Prior to the fatal conclusion of the expedition, the Antarctic had existed as a form of Neverland for Scott and the British explorers – a landscape of escape and adventure, and a land in which dangers are constantly present, but never truly fatal. The unique nature of the terrain and the climate were central to the positioning of the Antarctic as an 'otherworldly' space. Herbert Ponting, the expedition photographer, explicitly made a connection between the Antarctic and the world of Peter Pan when he wrote:

> several hundred feet of unseen ice, somewhere below, reflected so much light that the sea was brilliant emerald green […] In these wondrous grottoes played hundreds of Peter Pan fairies – rainbow-hued flashes of light, mirrored by the dancing, lapping wavelets. (1923, p.54)

The Antarctic, like Neverland, was also a landscape of escape. Francis Spufford records that the explorers had "become gloriously junior again, responsible to each other yet free from the persona of responsibility. And they are allowed to pitch in and get dirty. Jobs that are ordinary for the sailors are fun for them" (1996, p.302). Just as Neverland provided a landscape to which Peter Pan and his Lost Boys could escape the realities of the adult world, including the inevitability of aging, so too the Antarctic acted as a landscape out-of-time, and a place where the explorers could escape the normal duties of life. The ability of the Antarctic to function as a kind of Neverland enabled Scott and his crew to play out a child's vision of adventure but this adventure would have disastrous consequences because, unlike the Lost Boys, there would be no miraculous intervention to prevent the explorers' untimely deaths.

For his own part, Barrie eventually came to see Scott as a "variation on the Peter Pan theme" (as cited in Birkin & Goode, 2003, p.210). Scott's constant desire to travel, and his inability to commit to the realities of adult life, can be seen to reflect the unsettled and childlike Peter Pan. Although, unlike Peter Pan, Scott was clearly attracted to women and pursued and married Kathleen Bruce, he had left his new wife within two years to return to his own personal Neverland. As Max Jones notes, "Scott's second Antarctic expedition was formally announced on 13 September 1909. The following day Kathleen gave birth to a boy named Peter" (2006, p.xxv). Evidently, before his son was even born Scott was planning his own departure. The name Scott chose for his son relates to a character defined by his refusal to grow up. In Barrie's earlier text, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* (1902) we are told that Peter Pan is ageless because "though he was born so long ago he has never had a birthday … he escaped from being human when he was seven days old; he escaped by the window and flew back to Kensington Gardens" (2004, p.166). Yet it was not the child Peter who contrived to escape, but his father, Scott, who planned his own adventures which enabled him to evade the responsibilities and mundanities of family life. Scott's willingness to face death can also

be seen to echo Peter Pan's casual approach to lethal threats. In *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up,* Peter faces death by drowning following an attack by Hook during which he claims to have been injured and left unable to fly – it is at this point that he likens death to a "big adventure". Linda Robertson (2009) points to the moments before this declaration, and argues that Pan embraces death in this scene. Robertson argues that Peter feigns his inability to fly in order to be faced with the rather thrilling possibility of drowning (p.53). This same reckless embrace of danger can be seen in Scott's efforts to reach the South Pole. He and his companions had come close to death on the *Discovery* expedition, and still he returned, determined to face the danger in order to claim the prize.

The connection between Scott and Barrie's *Peter Pan* is the focus of J. D. Hodder Williams's 1913 *Like English Gentlemen*. Hodder Williams sets out his ambitions for the text in an opening statement: "This story of the glorious last days of Captain Scott and his heroic comrades has been specially prepared for schools" (p.3). This short introductory sentence connects the child readership, the educational context, the intention to position the story as a heroic tragedy, and the specific focus on the 'good deaths' of the men in the tale. The author shares with Scott and Barrie an idea of what it means to live and die like an "English gentleman", conflating the term with notions of heroism, gallantry, duty, and honour. Like Scott, Hodder Williams omits only Evans from this company of gentlemen: "Poor Evans! If he had not fallen! If his strength had not failed! If only they could have left him where he fell. Poor heroes! *But they were four English gentlemen*" (1913: 22, emphasis added). For Hodder Williams, Evans was a "simple seaman" whereas the four officers were "English gentlemen". Hodder Williams goes on to ask his child readers to re-evaluate their own ideas about death: "How do English gentlemen die? Is dying which seems sometimes as we lie awake at night, so awful a thing, a big adventure?" (p.5). This draws directly from the play text of *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Would Not Grow Up* (1904). Peter facing death asserts:

> PETER: (with a drum beating in his breast as if he were a real boy at last.) To die would be an awfully big adventure. (Barrie, 2014, Act 3)

There is an ambiguity in Barrie's words, an "awfully big adventure" could be just that – awful, overwhelming – the familiar format of adventure made strange through size and import. This ambiguity is missing in Hodder Williams's words; here it is our perception of death which has been awful, the reality is simply "a big adventure" (1913, p.5). Presenting death as an adventure could be intended to remove some of the anxieties surrounding death; however, the result is to portray the deaths of the explorers as somehow unreal, simply part of another adventure. The perception of exploration as an act of play evident in *Like English Gentlemen* connects with contemporary attitudes within organisations such as the Royal Geographical Society. Max Jones records that following the announcement of Norwegian victory in the race to the pole, "The RGS president Leonard Darwin wrote simply that Amundsen 'has not played the game'" (2006, p.xxix). When Hodder Williams's narrative finally reaches its inescapable conclusion, he creates an image of Scott serenely awaiting death: "he propped himself against the tent pole, and like an English gentleman, without complaint, without fear, waited, too, for the coming of kindly death. [...] And that was the beginning of the greatest adventure of all" (1913, p.30-32). Scott's frostbitten hands and feet, his pain from starvation and thirst, and all the realities of death, are all forgotten in order to craft a narrative which glorifies Scott's expedition for the child reader. Hodder Williams draws on the connection which Barrie, and Scott himself, created between the explorer and the ageless protagonist in order to present Scott as similarly ageless and effectively immortal.

Time in "Heroic Era" Narratives

In a 1922 address entitled 'Courage' J.M. Barrie said:

> When I think of Scott I remember the strange Alpine story of the youth who fell down a glacier and was lost, and of how a scientific companion, one of several who accompanied him, all young, computed that the body would again appear at a certain date and place many years afterwards. When the time came round some of the survivors returned to the glacier to see if the prediction would be fulfilled; all old men now; and the body reappeared as young as on the day he left them. So Scott and his comrades emerge out of the white immensities always young. (as cited in Leane, 2012, p.170)

Barrie presents death as a pause rather than an ending, and the Antarctic as a landscape of temporal stasis where Scott can retain his youth. At the same time, he imagines the landscape as a space of renewal or repetition where the explorer sheds the physical signs of starvation, suffering, or even death, in order to 'emerge out of the white immensities' ready once again to attempt to conquer the pole. The preservative effects of the Antarctic ice, combined with the perception of the continent as an 'otherworldly' space (which was developed long before explorers began to investigate the interior of the continent), fostered the view of the Antarctic as a place out-of-time, and enabled commentators and authors, such as Barrie, to imagine Scott and his companions as merely suspended in time. This idea of stasis or repetition dominates the functioning of time in "Heroic Era" narratives for children.

Time in "Heroic Era" narratives for children is compressed, replayed, and continually layered. The chronotope that dominates these stories is what I will term the "Heroic Era" chronotope. The sequence of the "Heroic-Era" narrative is as follows:

> Heroic death or heroic survival → departure → boat journey → trials/ suffering → heroic survival or heroic death.

From the very first published edition of Scott's diaries their format has been the same. The text opens with the deaths of the explorers and then goes back to the beginning of their

journey. This results in a cyclical narrative which moves towards the moment of death before beginning again, creating a repeating pattern. The majority of children's texts about the *Terra Nova* echo this structure and adopt this cyclical temporal pattern. Similarly, the narratives of the *Endurance* often open by framing the story as a tale of amazing survival, and then return to the beginning. This means that within both the *Terra Nova* and *Endurance* narratives, there is a cyclical pattern introduced from the very beginning of the texts as the conclusion is foreshadowed so that every page and event is moving inexorably towards death or survival. This foreshadowing is often included in paratextual elements, such as a foreword or introduction by the author or another contributor. Evelyn Dowdeswell, Julian Dowdeswell and Angela Seddon's 2012 *Scott of the Antarctic* begins: "In 1911 two groups of men set off to reach the South Pole for the first time. Roald Amundsen arrived there first, but Robert Falcon Scott's heroic adventure and death will always be remembered" (p.4). If the reader is a keen Antarctic enthusiast and has read more than one of these retellings then the predictability of the narrative is enhanced. In Philip Briggs's *Man of Antarctica* (1959), Briggs follows the description of Evans's death with the words: "The Antarctic had claimed the first of the five lives" (p.90). As each expected event occurs – the arrival at the Pole and disappointment of discovering that they have lost their race, the death of Evans, Oates stirring last words, and the final grim discovery of the tent, the familiar pattern of the narratives is confirmed. In the *Terra Nova* narratives, authors make the pattern of the narrative explicit for the reader, and allusions such as Briggs's "first of the five lives" demonstrate the progress of the narrative through the pre-established pattern. In *Deconstructing the Hero* (1997), Margery Hourihan describes the hero narrative as "a story which has been told over and over again, in innumerable versions from the earliest times" (p.1). She argues that this story, of 'the hero and his quest", "is always essentially the same" (p.1). The pattern of the children's *Terra Nova* narratives fits within the standard formulation of the hero narrative, positioning the

protagonists as the quintessential (white, European, male) heroes, and their desire to reach the South Pole as their heroic quest. The explorers' deaths are introduced at the beginning and are situated as heroic. This ensures that death does not represent a conclusion, but a beginning, and a heroic victory over the landscape which is positioned as the 'wild' antagonist in the story. Hourihan maintains that the hero story "is our favourite story and it has been told so many times that we have come to believe that what it says about the world is true" (1997, p.1). By taking a story that has a basis in historical facts, and mapping it onto the familiar format of the heroic narrative, these stories assert the truth of the heroic narrative by demonstrating a real-world example of this story, and simultaneously ensure that the protagonists and their quest benefit from being understood within the framework of the hero story, by gaining heroic status. The use of the hero story format also helps to make the stories appear timeless; they lose their specific rooting in the early twentieth century and instead become iterations of a larger, essentially never-ending, myth. In the "Heroic Era" stories the children's authors provide their readers with the opportunity to see how the heroic quest is enacted within the specific landscape of the Antarctic.

The "Heroic Era" chronotope consists of two conflicting chronotopes; there is the internal chronotope – the way that time proceeds in the stories and how it impacts the characters – at the same time there is an external chronotope – the way prior knowledge of these stories, or paratextual elements such as forewords, impact on the readers' understanding of time. The internal chronotope is largely linear, as the explorers move through their journey. In the *Terra Nova* narratives, the explorers travel southwards through the sea, and then on land towards the South Pole. For the protagonists in the narratives, chance seems to govern, just as in Bakhtin's "adventure chronotope" of the Greek Romance. The bad luck of a snowstorm, the incomprehensible lack of fuel, or the "astonishing" failure of the man "we least expected to fail" (Scott, 2006, p.421), all fundamentally impact the protagonists' chances

of survival and their ability to progress on their journey. However, for the narrator and the reader, the deaths of the men are never in doubt. The external experience of the chronotope for the reader contrasts greatly within the internal experience of the characters, because the external reader (child or adult) understands the sequence of events to which they are witness. While time drags interminably by for the explorers as they sit in their tent waiting out a blizzard, or hoping for a chance to escape the ice crushing their ship, for the reader the narrative seems to be propelled towards its inevitable conclusion.

The majority of *Terra Nova* narratives end with the deaths of the explorers, or the discovery of the tent by the rest of the *Terra Nova* crew and the construction of a cairn as a memorial to the men. The aftermath of the expedition is largely ignored, including the miserable journey back to Britain, the devastation of the men's families, and the Antarctic expeditions which followed Scott's. This adds to the impression of the deaths as temporary or unreal because the reader is not allowed to see the impact of the deaths for the explorers' families, or to see time progress in the Antarctic, and the events of the *Terra Nova* narrative become temporally distant. Instead, the deaths represent an interlude before the explorers can once again begin their quest, the pattern has been completed and can now recommence. The wider lives of the explorers, or the broader cultural context is not allowed to interfere with the familiar pattern. As long as the story can remain intact and familiar, the pattern can continue to repeat.

The "Heroic Era" chronotope shapes the narratives of Scott and Shackleton, however it also has a much broader impact within Antarctic literature for children more generally. The cyclical pattern established in the "Heroic Era" narratives and the continued dominance of these narratives in the cultural understanding of the Antarctic, creates a layering of time and space in Antarctic literature for children. The events of the "Heroic Era" impact upon nearly every genre of literature written about the continent since the expeditions took place at the

beginning of the twentieth century. Sometimes this is through direct references to the explorers, or through the appearance of "Heroic Era" huts in the landscape. As I discuss in Chapter Five, the impact of the "Heroic Era" chronotope is most evident in the adventure literature written about the continent, which features ghost explorers, and hidden shipwrecks which emerge out of the ice, and in which chthonic spaces and the potential treasures or horrors hidden in these spaces are an enduring concern. The impact of the "Heroic Era" on later Antarctic fiction is also evident in Antarctic whaling narratives such as Alan Villiers's *Whalers of the Midnight Sun* (1934) where the young protagonists re-enact a "Heroic-Era" trek across the Antarctic ice.

The repetition and layering which characterises the "Heroic Era" chronotope is also evident within broader cultural engagement with the continent. The centenary of Scott's expedition in the early twenty-first century has been a particular stimulus for re-enactments as explorers seek to repeat famous expeditions. In 2011, the International Scott Centenary Expedition set out to retrace Scott's route to the Pole, while in 2013 frostbite forced Sir Ranulph Fiennes to abandon an attempt to retrace Shackleton's intended trans-Antarctic route for the Endurance expedition. In 2016, Scottish explorer Luke Robertson re-enacted Scott's efforts to reach the South Pole and became "the first Scot to complete a solo, unassisted and unsupported trek to the South Pole" (Fraser, 2016, n.pag). Also in January 2016, Henry Worsley, a distant relative of Frank Worsley, skipper of the *Endurance*, died attempting to re-enact Shackleton's trans-Antarctic route from the Endurance expedition. The BBC noted: "Mr Worsley, 55, was trying to complete the unfinished journey of his hero, Sir Ernest Shackleton, but in his final audio message, he said: 'My summit is just out of reach'" ("Explorer Henry Worsley dies", 2016). Within British literature about the Antarctic and within wider culture the "Heroic-Era" continues to shape human perceptions of and engagement with the Antarctic landscape.

There is great irony in the fact that Scott and Shackleton helped to usher in a form of cyclical time within the Antarctic because, in their own work, they were seeking to position the Antarctic within a wider, *linear* understanding of time. This is particularly true for Scott, who was deeply committed to his scientific work. In July 1911 during Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition, Apsley Cherry-Garrard, Edward Wilson, and 'Birdie' Bowers set out on a mid-winter Antarctic trek in search of a penguin egg, in order to understand the evolutionary link between reptiles and birds. This, and other scientific work completed by Scott and Shackleton, was intended to position the Antarctic within a linear scientific understanding of the world. However the lasting dominance of their actions within the landscape and the way this period seems to repeat and be re-enacted disrupts the linearity of the timeline they were striving to create, instead opening the way for a chronotope which is inherently cyclical, as is seen in modern narrative retellings of their stories.

Another important element of the "Heroic Era" chronotope is the heroic figure at the centre of these narratives, and the impact of time upon this figure. Hourihan argues that the "sequence of events" in the heroic narrative is controlled by the heroic figure. Events in the narrative are "the consequence of his will, his ambition, his activism, his rationality and his view of the world" (1997, p.58). It is the hero who shapes the world and events, not the other way around. Similarly, Bakhtin argues that for the hero of Greek romance "the hammer of events shatters nothing and forges nothing – it merely tries the durability of an already finished product. And the product passes the test" (1981, p.107). One of the defining features of the Antarctic hero is that, like the prototypical hero described by Hourihan and Bakhtin, they arrive fully formed. During his Antarctic expedition, Scott does not learn and grow into a heroic leader. The same is true of Shackleton, as will be investigated more fully in Chapter Three. These Antarctic heroes arrive in the continent as heroes in waiting. In the "Heroic Era" narratives for children, the passage of time does not help develop or shape the hero's

character; instead it allows them to demonstrate those inherent heroic qualities which were dormant in modern industrialised Britain. While their time in the Antarctic tests the heroic qualities of the leaders, it does not fundamentally change them, their character remains intact, and they have proven their heroic nature through demonstrations of courage, endurance and sacrifice. Hourihan argues that the hero's "mode is domination – of his environment, of his enemies, of his friends, of women, and of his own emotions, his own 'weaknesses'" (1997, p.58). Scott and Shackleton can both be seen to dominate their environment, their crew, and their environment in these texts. Within the different "Heroic Era" narratives this domination is presented slightly differently in order to match the specific events, however the focus on domination, and on the dominant hero, remains.

The fact that time in the Antarctic does not appear to trigger changes within the protagonists in these stories, is one way that the "Heroic Era" texts differ from other genres of Antarctic literature for children, such as whaling or adventure literature, and from many adult texts about the continent. Across centuries and different literary genres, Antarctica has been depicted as a transformative space, the whaling narratives epitomise this, as time within the unique space of the Antarctic has a metamorphic effect on the protagonists, and results in a movement from child to adult, boy to man. Foundational Antarctic narratives such as Coleridge's "Rime" and Poe's *Pym* position the Antarctic as a landscape which triggers significant changes. In Coleridge's "Rime" It is the mariner's experiences in Antarctic waters which force him to the role of a living augury, warning others against making the mistake which cost him so dearly. Elizabeth Leane notes the "inevitable" focus on themes of "self-discovery and personal transformation" within more modern realist narratives set in the Antarctic (2012, p.152). Time does not have the same transformational impact in "Heroic Era" narratives for children. These stories, particularly the story of Scott's last expedition, are presented as depictions of fully formed masculinity. In "Heroic Era" narratives, the child

reader is offered Edwardian manhood in all its glory – courageous, strong, self-sacrificing, and nationalistic. However, having reached this state of perfection, the hero is unable to progress or develop. Instead, in the *Terra Nova* story, the only option for this fully-realised masculinity is death, which imaginatively preserves the heroic body.

Heroism and Masculinity

Margery Hourihan writes that the hero story "tells how white European men are the natural masters of the world because they are strong, brave, skilful, rational and dedicated" (1997, p.1). The *Terra Nova* narratives assert the dominance of white European men through showing their ability to 'conquer' the Antarctic wilderness. The specific form of heroism celebrated in the "Heroic Era" narratives is based in the male body's ability to withstand suffering and to complete physical feats requiring stamina, endurance, and physical strength throughout their quest to 'conquer' the Antarctic landscape. The focus on this very traditional form of masculinity that is evident within the children's retellings of the *Terra Nova* narrative is part of the wider focus on men and masculinity within Antarctic literature and can be seen to be part of the 'masculinist' bias within Antarctic scientific and creative production. Michele Le Deouff argues that masculinist work "forgets about women's existence and concerns itself only with the position of men" (2007, p.42). By the early twentieth century, the Antarctic had already been established as a predominantly masculine space through the whaling activity around the continent. This connection between the Antarctic and male endeavour was perpetuated by the "Heroic Era" voyages. These expeditions were part of a rigid patriarchal system including such traditionally masculine organisations as the Royal Navy and the RGS and the crews of the expeditions were all-male. The consumers of Antarctic materials, such as the books written about the expeditions were often presumed to be male; when Scott wrote in his "Message" that had he lived he would have had a tale to tell

that would have "stirred the heart of every Englishman" he is reflecting a more general gender bias in language towards masculine pronouns, but he is also reflecting the implied male audience for stories of exploration and adventure. This focus on a male readership meant that, in addition to being excluded from travelling to the Antarctic or taking part in Antarctic expeditions, women were also imaginatively excluded from engagement with the continent. Gillian Rose uses Le Deouff's terminology to assert the essential masculine bias of the field of geography. Rose argued that traditional geographical practices and research involves the "active erasure of women's existence and concerns" (1993, p.87). Given the predominantly male engagement with the Antarctic, Rose's use of the term "masculinist" might be considered to be particularly appropriate in relation to the early engagement with this continent. The literature written about the continent for children added considerably to this masculinist bias through perpetuating the focus on a male readership and through the image of heroic masculinity in the texts.

In these texts, the wild landscape of the Antarctic is established as the antagonist while the explorers are the heroic protagonists at the centre of the narratives. The ability of the explorers to travel through the space is presented as a form of victory. Active verbs fill the narratives which focus on the male body in action moving through the physical landscape of the Antarctic. Kennedy Maclean speaks of a "great march into the unknown" (1910, p.340). Hodder Williams describes the men "stumbling, sliding, storming over the peaks, across the chasms, conquering always" (1913, p.13). Similarly, Lewis Broad writes that Scott "conquered" the Beardmore Glacier in the Antarctic interior (1936, p.121). In the whaling narratives victory was represented through the struggle with the great whales and the final act of killing the whale; here simply being in and moving through the landscape is presented as conquering the space.

There is, however, a noticeable shift in more recent texts which retell Scott's *Terra Nova* narrative as authors writing since the 1990s refrain from using such overtly combative language. Nevertheless, the focus on the male body and the feats completed by these male heroes remains. Philip Sauvain describes Scott and his crew "hauling" sleds that "weighed nearly half a ton" (1993, p.22), emphasising the men's brute strength and virility. Narrative descriptions of the male body in action, "conquering" the landscape, are reinforced by images of the heroes in action. The *Terra Nova* photographer Herbert Ponting provided a huge number of images of the explorers in action and many of these images were specifically designed to create a romantic image of Antarctic exploration and to present the explorers as heroes. These images frequently appear in children's retellings of the *Terra Nova* narrative, particularly in texts published since the 1990s. In Dowdeswell, Dowdeswell & Seddon's 2012 *Scott of the Antarctic* an image of the men harnessed to their sledges accompanies descriptions of their departure for the pole, demonstrating their physical strength and endurance (Fig. 1, below). This same image appears in the text by Philip Sauvain along with another image (Fig. 2, below) displaying the effort required to haul the sledge.

Figure 1: Man-hauling in Scott's Terra Nova expedition. From Dowdeswell et al.'s 2012 Scott of the Antarctic, p.17.

Figure 2: Man-hauling image from Philip Sauvain's (1993) *Robert Scott in the Antarctic* p.22.

These images of man-hauling complement descriptions of the huge physical effort required to traverse the Antarctic landscape, and demonstrate that the polar party relied only on their own physical strength to achieve their final goal. The explorers' faces are often obscured, which facilitates casting the men as archetypal heroes. In both images, the explorers progress out of

the frame, moving in to the unknown. Each step is positioned as a victory, expanding human knowledge and ownership of this wilderness landscape.

If the explorers are presented as absolutely masculine, the landscape which the explorers are attempting to "conquer" is, by contrast, feminised, particularly in *Terra Nova* narratives written up until the 1960/70s. Gillian Rose argues that the "masculine gaze", focusing on landscape, "sees a feminine body which requires interpreting by the cultured knowledgeable look" (Rose, 1993, p.98-99). She further argues that "the same sense of visual power as well as pleasure is at work as the eye traverses both field and flesh: the masculine gaze is of knowledge and desire" (Rose, 1993, p.98-99). The "Heroic Era" explorers gazing at the Antarctic landscape saw something they could claim. There is additional visual pleasure in the viewing of a "virgin" landscape, a place hitherto untouched by man. The proprietorial approach to landscape is replicated in the children's texts which retell the Scott story: we are invited see the space through the eyes of the explorer as he gazes at his newfound landscape. The possessive view of the Antarctic as feminised landscape is overt in Lewis Broad's "Five Men Versus the Antarctic" (1936). Broad writes of the Antarctic using feminine pronouns and describes Scott's polar journey as "Five men versus the Antarctic in her most rigorous mood, seeking revenge because the invader had wrested from her [her] inmost secrets" (1936, p.117). Lewis positions the construction of the cairn over the dead men's tent as a form of sexual conquest of the feminised landscape:

> Scott and his men battled with the Antarctic and won through to gain the innermost sanctuary. The spirit of Antarctica might at the end taste the hollow triumph of revenge, but these men erected on Antarctica's snow white breast, a cairn piled high, at once the grave and monument of the five Englishmen who were her victors. (Lewis, 1936, p.132)

The cairn and the cross erected in memory of the explorers are posited as a mutilation of the Antarctic landscape in the form of the female body. The female breast – both an outward sign of femininity and a symbol of the female role as mother – is here made to be the site of the violation of the Antarctic by the five male explorers. There is a deep discomfort in reading these words which seem to liken the actions of Scott and his crew to the gang rape of a resistant female enemy and yet Lewis's text is not unique. Philip Briggs's *Man of Antarctica* describes that "down south in these latitudes, Nature was iron-hard, grim and cold. She allowed for no mistakes" (1959, p.30). Having established the Antarctic as feminine the assault by the explorers gains uneasy sexual connotations. Again, it is the construction of the cairn that is positioned as the demeaning victory over the feminised Antarctic:

> The men built a tremendous cairn above the three bodies in the tent, and there they still lie, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson and Lieutenant Bowers *at the gateway of the country they conquered***,** on the threshold of those lonely lands. Near that point, on Observation Hill, a giant cross was later set up to their memory. Under the inscription are the words: 'To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.' (1959, p.96, emphasis added)

In these texts, the South Pole is the last place that the Antarctic has successfully hidden from the male explorers determined to gain entry into the "inmost sanctuary". Once this goal has been achieved the female body of the Antarctic has been symbolically laid bare for her male "conquerors" to gaze upon in victory. The fact that the Antarctic was, at the time, one of the last places in the world to be explored and mapped, adds additional symbolic weight to the achievement of the explorers.

Despite the masculinist bias evident in Antarctic exploration and literature, female interest in, and writing about, the Antarctic complicates the gender dynamics within the continent. Francis Spufford records that in the Victorian era the polar expeditions came to be

viewed as morally appropriate material for women, who: "had the world of ice revealed to them – were invited into it, indeed, as a domain suitable for the female imagination" (1996, p.100). Some women also took active roles in lobbying for Arctic expeditions, most notably Lady Jane Franklin, the wife of Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin, who personally funded expeditions in search of her lost husband. Similarly, Spufford argues that Kathleen Scott "glori[ed] in" the fanfare of being an Antarctic explorer's wife, and widow (1996, p.299). Following the news of the *Terra Nova* disaster, it was Kathleen Scott, an artist and sculptor by trade, who was commissioned to produce the statue of Scott which would join the other notable dead in Waterloo Place. In this way, it was a female creative product that became the official symbol of Antarctic heroism and death for the British public. This statue depicts and celebrates action and yet by its very nature it is a representation of the heroic body made still in a place which celebrates the heroic dead. Kathleen Scott was also heavily involved in editing her husband's diaries for publication (Jones, 2006: xliii) and so helped to shape the public understanding of the expedition.

Since the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first century women writers have also begun to actively retell the story of Scott and the *Terra Nova* expedition for children and the implied audience is no longer made explicit in the texts. Since 1990, female British authors such as Sandra Markle, Meredith Hooper, Anne Curtis and Catherine Charley have all published versions of the Scott *Terra Nova* narrative. This results in a shift in terms of the subject and object of the gaze in the texts. Catherine Charley in *Robert Scott and Roald Amundsen Raced to the South Pole* (2003) describes Scott as a "man of splendid physique. He was 5 feet 9 inches tall, with deep blue eyes, broad shoulders, a solid chest, and he was extremely fit" (2003, p.7). Here, a female author gazes at the male body. There is no overt subversive intent in Charley's work, however, given the masculinist history of writing about Antarctica and the gender relationships within this space, this text could be seen to be

disruptive simply because Charley is a female author objectifying a male "heroic" figure in a work for children. Catherine Nash in "Reclaiming Vision: looking at landscape and the body" argues that "Women looking and representations of women looking may deconstruct essentialist notions of place and gender identity" (1996, p.157). Women writing about the "Heroic Era" can, therefore, be seen to be unsettling the established role of woman as object of the gaze in this landscape. Instead, in these instances, woman is the holder of the gaze and the male explorer is the object in view. Charley's text illustrates the subversive potential of female writing on the Antarctic. This potential is fully realised in Geraldine McCaughrean's novel *The White Darkness* (2005) which openly challenges the Scott legend and inserts a young female protagonist into the traditionally masculine environment of the Antarctic in order to contest traditional ways of envisioning the landscape and the figures associated with the early exploration of the continent. This text, and the subversive potential of radical rewritings of "Heroic Era" narrative, will be discussed at length in Chapter Four.

The Death of the Hero

The *Terra Nova* narratives focus primarily on the male body in action, however the historical events that they are portraying also force them to include descriptions of the heroic body in decline. The children's stories portray, sometimes in gruelling detail, the effect of the Antarctic environment on the bodies of the explorers. Hodder Williams describes Oates's decline: "his hands, his feet were almost dead, nothing but lumps of pain" (1913, p.23). Similarly, Lewis Broad (1936) describes Oates as "nearly done" owing to frostbite (1936, p.128). There are comparable descriptions in more modern texts. Philip Sauvain's 1993 *Robert Scott in the Antarctic* repeats the descriptions of Oates suffering. However, Sauvain and many other authors of children's *Terra Nova* narratives do not detail the physical decline of Scott himself. In his diaries and letters Scott described his own worsening condition. On

Sunday 18th of March he wrote: "My right foot has gone, nearly all the toes" (Scott, 2006, p.411). A day later he admitted, "There is no chance to nurse one's feet till we can get hot food into us. Amputation is the least I can hope for now, but will the trouble spread?" (2006, p.411). In his diary Tryggve Gran, the Norwegian member of the British team, revealed that: "Wilson and Bowers looked serene, but Scott appeared to have 'fought hard in the moment of death'. Their skin was hard, yellow and marked by frostbite, a testament to the ordeal their bodies had suffered in life and in death" (Jones, 2006, p.120). This is not the image of the explorers that features in the children's rewritings of the Scott narrative. These stories prefer to describe the physical suffering of Oates in order to explain his eventual decision to walk out of the tent to his death, rather than to describe the disintegration of the body of the primary protagonist. In this way, the image of Scott, the central male hero, remains physically intact. However, the description of the decline of Oates is a glimpse into the physical suffering of the explorers and the failure of these idealised bodies to endure the conditions within the Antarctic landscape.

There are similarities between the detailed descriptions of suffering within the whaling literature and the descriptions of the decline and death of the Terra Nova crew. Both sets of texts portray the endurance of suffering as a physical and moral triumph, and through suffering both sets of protagonists achieve some form of transition. The boy whalers become men and are accepted as part of the whaling crew, while in death the explorers become heroes, and martyrs in Britain's quest for scientific and imperial domination. The deification of the heroes which is particularly evident in the early *Terra Nova* narratives such as Hodder Williams's *Like English Gentlemen* (1913) is also reminiscent of the Victorian stories of death and disease upon which the whaling narratives drew for their descriptions of the suffering of their young protagonists. In Victorian literature for children, death preserved the idealised child character in a period of presumed innocence. Anne Higonnet argues that "the

beautiful child corpse is one morbidly logical conclusion of the Romantic child image" (1998, p.29). Like the child figure who is presented as representative of innocence and goodness, all of which is preserved by death, the hero figure is held up as a paragon of courage, physical strength and moral virtue. In the *Terra Nova* stories for children published in the early half of the twentieth century, death is a preserving force which, along with the icy landscape, ensures that the explorers bodies and heroic legacy are protected.

The death of the heroes is the climax of all of the *Terra Nova* narratives and the stories continually build towards this moment. In *The Sense of an Ending,* (1966) Frank Kermode argues that there is "a need in the moment of existence to belong, to be related to a beginning and to an end" (2000, p.4). Kermode asserts that humans seek structure in order to add meaning to the chaos that is our lives:

> Men, like poets, rush 'into the middest,' in medias res, when they are born; they also die in mediis rebus, and to make sense of their span they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems. The End they imagine will reflect their irreducible intermediary preoccupations. They fear it, and as far as we can see have always done so; the End is a figure for their own deaths. (2000, p.7)

In the *Terra Nova* narratives, death is represented in a way that it gives meaning to the lives of the explorers, and the *Terra Nova* expedition itself. The deaths of Scott and his crew are represented as significant and 'good'. Scott knew when he departed in 1910 that the expedition was potentially deadly. He wrote in his "Message", "We took risks, we knew we took them. Things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause for complain" (Scott, 2006, p.422). Scott's acceptance of death was shared by his friend Dr Edward Wilson who accompanied Scott on both the *Discovery* and *Terra nova* expeditions. Writing of Wilson, Francis Spufford contends:

> there can seem something frightening about his composure in his last, intensely moving letters, written while he lay dying on the Barrier in 1912. It is as if, once he had satisfied himself that he has done all that he can to survive, for the sake of Oriana and his companions, once he has legitimately failed to live despite his best efforts, the old reckless disregard [for life] is waiting serenely to catch him. He had fulfilled the conditions for a good death he had set down back in 1900. (1996, p.263)

Just as Wilson had his own conditions for a 'good death', Scott too was clearly aware of the potential to 'die well' on their Antarctic adventure. For these explorers in this landscape, and for the narrative accounts of their journey, it is not the fact of death but the nature of that death, which is of primary importance.

Pat Jalland, in "Victorian Death and its Decline" (1999) records that the idea of a "good" Christian death was prominent in England during the Victorian period (1999, p.232-233). The medieval concept of 'ars moriendi' or the 'art of dying' influenced Victorian attitudes towards death, and can be seen to be reflected in Edward Wilson's approach to death as described by Spufford, and in the way that Scott narrated his own death and the deaths of his crew. According to Jalland, chief among the requirements for a good death in the Victorian era were "fortitude in the face of physical suffering" and, "physical and mental capacity, for the completion of temporal and spiritual business. The dying person should be conscious and lucid until the end, resigned to God's will, able to beg forgiveness for past sins and to prove worthy of salvation' (Jalland, 1999, p.233). Scott made sure to demonstrate in his diaries and letters that he and his men fulfilled these requirements through their acts of physical endurance. In addition, the letters and diary entries, written while he lay dying, further attest to his mental acuity right up to the point of death. As described earlier, Scott repeatedly references God in his last diary entries and his "Message to the Public". These

religious references imply that the men had died as pious followers of God, adding a spiritual dimension to their deaths. These 'good deaths' help give meaning to an expedition which might otherwise have been simply considered a failure.

The children's texts retelling this story seize upon the meaning imparted to the narrative by Scott and continue to promote the heroism of the men through a celebration of the manner in which they faced death. Philip Sauvain's *Robert Scott in the Antarctic* repeats a sentiment which is present in many earlier texts: "Scott's team may not have been first to the South Pole, and they had lost their lives. However, when people learned how they had died, the explorers became heroes" (1993, p.5). For Sauvain, it is the not the fact of death but the manner of death that ensured that "the explorers became heroes". Through dying like English gentlemen, Scott and his companions converted a failed expedition into a heroic sacrifice. This sentiment became a mantra for Hodder Williams's *Like English Gentlemen* (1913), and remains relevant for texts about the expedition nearly a century later.

It is only when set in the context of the history of British polar exploration that the representations of death in the Scott narratives, and Scott's insistence that his men had died like gentlemen, gain their full significance. British polar exploration began in the Arctic and it was the legacy of the Arctic explorers – Ross, Parry, and Franklin – that Scott and Shackleton inherited as they sought to claim the South Pole for Britain. This legacy was a dubious inheritance. For many years, British Arctic explorers searched, seemingly in vain, for a route through the Northwest Passage. Many of these expeditions were blighted by failure and tragedy, the most notable was Sir John Franklin's disastrous final expedition aboard the *Terror* and *Erebus*.

In 1845 Sir John Franklin departed London and sailed north towards the Canadian Arctic for his third and final polar expedition. By 1850 the lack of any communication from either expedition ship prompted a large-scale search. In 1854, after nearly ten years without

any sign of the expedition despite extensive searching, the admiralty declared the ships and all the crew lost and the official records relating to Franklin's expedition were finally closed. It was later that same year that the first incendiary accounts by Dr John Rae first emerged. Rae had been employed by the Hudson's Bay Company and was completing land-based exploration of the region. Through his work he came into contact with members of Inuit tribes who were able to give first- and second-hand accounts of the fate that had befallen the Franklin crew. Rae's report was greeted by shock and disbelief. The offending statement in Rae's account was this: "From the mutilated state of many of the bodies and the contents of the kettles, it is evident that our wretched countrymen had been driven to the last resort – cannibalism – as a means of prolonging existence" (as cited in in Marlow, 1994: 165). Rae's suggestions were actively rejected by many including, and most vocally, Lady Franklin, the widow of the great explorer. Lady Franklin sought to counter Rae's assertions and to ensure that he would not be able to claim the reward that had been promised for information about the fate of the Franklin expedition (Spufford, 1996, p.179-180). Spufford notes that Rae's account rested on the testimony of members of the Inuit communities who had discovered the remains of the explorers, and that this reliance was seen as a key weakness in his argument. Spufford quotes an article by Dickens in *Household Words* in which the author described the Inuit witnesses as "a gross handful of uncivilised people, with a domesticity of blood and blubber" (as cited in Spufford, 1996, p.179). In 1857 it was ascertained that Franklin himself died in 1848, before any alleged acts of cannibalism took place. Thus vindicated, Franklin was posthumously credited with discovering the North-West passage and a statue of the explorer was finally erected in Westminster. However, the rumours and speculation continued and the event became enshrined in British culture and naval history. The missing expedition prompted a wide variety of folk songs, poetry, and investigatory accounts of the expedition which theorised about the exact events that led to the total loss of all crew and two ships. The

rumours of cannibalism have a sensationalist quality which ensures that they continue to dominate the cultural memory of the expedition. An article published in 2009 entitled, "Very British cannibals: How an epic Navy voyage across the Arctic came to a truly sinister end", asks:

> Did they kill the living, picking out the weak, the young and the expendable? Or did they confine their attentions to the dead? That, too, history cannot tell. But one thing is certain; the sailors ate their shipmates - not just one or two of them, but 40 or 50. Perhaps more. (Venning, 2009, n.pag)

It is the macabre elements of the tale that have remained in the popular memory of the event. The narrative has become one of failure and of the debasement of British values by those who represented the nation and by one man who supposedly personified the Victorian gentlemanly ideal.

As it became increasingly clear to Scott that his second voyage to the Antarctic would mirror Franklin's expedition in one disastrous manner – death in the polar landscape – Scott ensured that the deaths of his five-man polar party would be remembered as the deaths of English gentlemen: they would demonstrate how to 'die well' in the polar landscape. Scott ensured that no allegations could be levelled against himself or his crew by chronicling in detail their last weeks and days in his diary entries. The deaths of Seaman Edgar Evans and Titus Oates were documented, with the repeated reassurance that "we have stuck to our sick companions to the last" (Scott, 2006, p.410). Here, Scott is asserting that the chivalry, loyalty, and courage, which for him epitomised British exploration, was not abandoned by his crew, even in their last, most desperate, moments. Scott was also keen to demonstrate that the final three survivors of the polar party refused to end their own suffering prematurely. He notes that they "have decided it shall be natural – we shall march for the depot with or without our effects and die in our tracks" (Scott, 2006, p.412). When it became obvious that they would

not be able to leave the tent Scott became more resigned: "We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far" (Scott, 2006, p.412). Rejecting the un-gentlemanly (and unchristian) option of suicide, Scott records the decision of the explorers to endure additional suffering in order that "it shall be [a] natural" (i.e. good) death (2006, p.421). Scott's death, and the deaths of his companions, would over-write the murky history of Franklin, reaffirming English gallantry in the face of mortal dangers. The expedition letters and diaries, particularly the final writings of Scott, would be their enduring evidence; but more importantly they themselves, their very bodies, would be evidence of the gallant nature of their deaths. Scott's final lines in his "Message to the Public" state: "Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes *and our dead bodies must tell the tale*" (2006, p.422, emphasis added). Their bodies would act as evidence of the limits to which they had pushed themselves, but also as evidence of the manner of death. Further, they would be proof that the explorers did not, even in the most extreme circumstances, resort to cannibalism, which has been described by Elisbeth Probyn as the "ground zero of humanity" (2003, p.90). The greatest failure of the Franklin expedition was not the deaths of the entire crew but the manner in which they apparently died. They had seemingly allowed the polar landscape to fundamentally alter their characters – reducing them to cannibalising their own shipmates – and, in doing so, they risked forfeiting all claims to superiority over the landscape and its inhabitants. Scott frames his true victory over the Antarctic as his refusal to allow the Antarctic to change him; instead he would change the Antarctic, helping to write the history of the continent, and leaving a trail of human habitation over the formerly empty ice.

The children's texts enthusiastically quote Scott's claims about heroism in death and texts such as Hodder Williams's *Like English Gentlemen* (1913), Lewis Broad's "Five Men

Versus the Antarctic" (1936), and L. Du Garde Peach's *Captain Scott* (1963) all repeat Scott's claims that their bodies would act as proof of their refusal to be changed by the Antarctic landscape. Even as cultural perceptions of Scott changed, there has been a continuing focus on the nature of his death as heroic and gallant in the British children's literature about the *Terra Nova* expedition. In texts written in the years since Roland Huntford's evisceration of Scott in print, authors evidently feel bound to accept some criticisms of the explorer, such as his decision to include five men in the polar party, rather than four, as had originally been planned. These texts do sometimes acknowledge that Amundsen was the more efficient and well prepared of the two leaders. However, the texts still celebrate the heroic nature of Scott's death and directly quote Scott. Sandra Markle in *Animals Robert Scott Saw,* writes that the courage displayed by Scott's team in the face of death, "touched people's hearts" and "inspired others to explore remote parts of the world" (2008, p.40). Catherine Charley references the use of the Scott narrative in WWI:

> The story of Scott's courage in the face of his death was used to try to inspire the troops and to give them some confidence. Extracts from Scott's letters and journals were read out to the English troops to encourage them to be brave for their country. They were told that an Englishman could be positive, even when everything looked terrible. Oates was particularly singled out for giving his life to help others reach safety. (Charley, 2003, p.155)

The fact that Oates's sacrifice was wasted, and that his heroism failed to save any of his friends' lives, is ignored by both his fellow officers and by authors like Charley who later retell the events. Instead the text asserts that the explorers' heroic actions inspired further heroism. Charley also suggests that the child reader, like the soldiers in the war, could take inspiration from the acts of Scott and his companions. While Scott's organisational and leadership skills are no longer singled out for praise, he and his companions are still depicted

as paragons of courage and heroism, and the men's apparent composure in the face of death is central to their continuing veneration.

The portrayal in the children's retellings of the three men calmly awaiting death in their tent, unafraid and unregretful, contributes to their position as heroic figures but it also provides a representation of death which lacks veracity. The children's texts choose primarily to present the image of Scott which he constructed in his "Message to the Public". They overlook admissions of uncertainty which appeared in Scott's own diaries. There is a human tragedy which becomes almost overwhelming as you read Scott's diaries. As the situation becomes increasingly worse the reader sees the hints of the ending which has overshadowed each diary entry. We catch brief glimpses of Scott's uncertainty, his faltering self-belief. As we see Oates fulfil his heroic destiny we know that the other deaths are not far and yet the optimism of the men, and their unceasing struggles inspire us to wish for an alternative ending. Knowing that Scott was always going to die, it is still awful when he does. His last words seem desperate, he has failed as a polar explorer, and now he realises that he stands to fail as a father and a husband too, and so he asks his readers to take on his duties, "for God's sake look after our people" (Scott, 2006, p.412). Scott chose to omit his own fallibility in the "Message to the Public" and the omission robs this document of those elements that would allow the reader to empathise with Scott's plight. The reliance of the children's texts on this "Message" results in texts that efface the human tragedy of the story in order to present an uncomplicated heroic image of Scott and his companions.

Conclusion

Francis Spufford argued that in the 1950s and 1960s as interest waned in Scott, the "myth" retained "a secure if shrunken position as a perfectly typical subject for a Ladybird book for children" (Spufford, 1996, p.4). Certainly, children's literature has acted as a sanctuary for

Scott's reputation, a place where the myth could be safe from the virulent criticism of Huntford and others. The final passage from the Ladybird book written about the *Terra Nova* expedition illustrates the typical way that the story has been framed for children:

> So ended one of the most gallant ventures in the history of our race. Courage, determination, and the highest sense of duty were defeated by the worst weather of the most savage climate in the world. No men could have endured more: none ever set a nobler example of heroism and devotion. (Du Garde Peach, 1963, p.50)

The Antarctic environment is the villain, and the British explorers are heroic to have survived as long as they did. The imaginary Antarctic created in the children's texts about Scott is a place so inherently and resolutely wild that a heroic and 'gentlemanly' death within the landscape is a legitimate form of triumph over the Antarctic wilderness. What has not been explored previously is how influential the field of children's literature was on Scott's writing, and so the preservation of the 'myth' within children's literature represents a form of return to the adventure story origins of the narrative. Many authors writing about Scott for children have been largely unconcerned with the 'truth' of the expedition and have preferred to reiterate the established narratives precisely because Scott, influenced by his friend Barrie as well as other authors such as Stevenson, crafted such a compelling and complete story in his own work.

There is an evident desire within children's literature to present a straightforward picture of Scott as a national hero. In order to do this, the authors ignore the criticisms Scott has faced, and the wealth of material that is available about other contemporary expeditions which would provide a broader and more complex picture of early Antarctic exploration. In so faithfully retelling Scott's own narrative, the children's texts also perpetuate the national and class biases evident in his work, in particular the prejudicial representations of Edgar Evans, whose reputation has yet to be reconsidered or rehabilitated within literature for

children. Scott's attack on Evans's character has not been addressed in the children's *Terra Nova* narratives. Margery Hourihan argues that the Victorian hero 'though not necessarily aristocratic, is almost always a 'gentleman', a member of the dominant social class." (1997, p.62). *Terra Nova* narratives for children published in the first half of the twentieth century reflect this preoccupation with the hero's position as a gentleman, most obviously Hodder Williams's *Like English Gentlemen* (1913). The stories published in the twenty-first century do not denigrate Evans in the same overt way as earlier texts; however they also do not interrogate Scott's depiction of his comrade, or earlier stories which perpetuated negative portrayals of the Welsh sailor. This implicit class bias is contrary to pervading trends within the wider field of children's literature, which have, as Hourihan writes, 'moved beyond a preoccupation with social position' (1997, p.63).

The focus on Scott's narrative also ensures that the stories remain centred on a conventional image of heroic masculinity. While *Terra Nova* narratives written since the 1980s no longer overtly feminise the landscape or depict the expeditions as an assault on the feminised space, the problematic gender representations remain, as the explorers are commended for their physical strength and endurance, while women are largely absent or appear only as wives or mothers left to mourn the fallen heroes. The dominance of this genre within Antarctic literature perpetuates the masculinist focus of the field.

The story of Scott and the *Terra Nova* expedition continues to be a mainstay within the UK primary curriculum. Scott features within course materials for children in Key Stage 1 or early Key Stage 2[6], and it is not uncommon to find year groups or school 'houses' named

[6] Schools such as Thorpe Lee Primary School in Surrey detail their Year 4's focus on Scott as a means of developing literacy. The Year 4 homepage describes that: "This half term we are learning about Captain Robert Falcon Scott and his team's quest to be the first person to reach the South Pole.
We will be exploring the key events from their treacherous expedition and reading extracts from Captain Scott's diary. The children will be using their new knowledge to create leaflets, persuasive letters, diary entries and news reports" (Thorpe Lea, 2017, n.pag), from: http://www.thorpe-lea.surrey.sch.uk/red-pandas-year-4/

after the explorer.[7] Scott remains a figure who is presented as a hero for young readers and the events of the *Terra Nova* expedition continue to be perceived as suitable material for young readers. As will be investigated in Chapter Four, there are authors who are working to interrogate the "Heroic Era" narratives and to subvert established conventions within the genre, however these texts are the exceptions rather than the rule within writing about the Antarctic for children. Given the nationalistic and masculinist bias that I have charted within the *Terra Nova* narratives for children, I argue that these stories, and how we present them for children, deserve greater consideration, particularly if they are to continue to be used within an educational context.

While Scott has retained his venerated position within children's literature, societal understandings of heroism have shifted and changed, and it is now often survival, not sacrifice that defines heroic acts. This shift in perception is apparent in the increasing recognition which another explorer has received in recent years. Scott's long-time rival, Ernest Shackleton, so thoroughly overshadowed in life, has risen to prominence in writing for adults and children. The Shackleton narratives actively contest the notion of death as heroic and the explorer's story instead becomes one about survival and endurance within the Antarctic landscape.

[7] One of four 'houses' in Woodville Primary School in Chelmsford, Essex is named after Scott. The other three are named after Winston Churchill, Neil Armstrong and Guglielmo Marconi, see the school's website for more details: http://www.woodvilleprimaryschool.org.uk/scott/. In West Row Community Primary School in Suffolk, one of two Early Year Foundation Stage classes is named after Scott. See school website for full details: http://www.westrow.suffolk.sch.uk/index.php/pupils/scott-class-eyfs.

Chapter Three: Ernest Shackleton and Heroic Survival

On the 11th of February 1913, shortly after the announcement of the deaths of Scott and his polar party, Ernest Shackleton wrote an article in the *New York Times* praising his former commander and lamenting the loss of "the brilliant leader of that splendid expedition" (Shackleton, 1913). This reverent reference disguises a long and bitter rivalry between the two men. Their experiences together on the *Discovery* expedition (1901-04) had created a lasting animosity between the two men. Shackleton's subsequent attempts to claim the South Pole for himself, and the fame he garnered for his *Nimrod* expedition (1907-09), and his new 'farthest south' record, irritated Scott who saw himself as the man chosen for the job by the British establishment. However, despite the animosity that lingered between the explorers, their stories seem tied together. In his biography of Shackleton published in 1985, Roland Huntford wrote, "this book grew out of my work on Scott and Amundsen, for at every other turn the shadow of Ernest Shackleton fell across my path" (1985, p.xv). It was in the context of Scott's death that Shackleton's survival appeared miraculous, while conversely the ability of Shackleton and Amundsen to survive in the Antarctic was later read as an indictment of Scott's leadership given the fatal conclusion of his final expedition.

While Scott is predominantly remembered for his death during the *Terra Nova* expedition, it is Shackleton's remarkable survival during his 1914-18 *Endurance* expedition that is at the centre of the Shackleton myth. During the *Endurance* expedition the became caught in the pack ice around the Antarctic. Months of uncertainty followed as the ship drifted with the pack. Eventually the pressure of the pack crushed the ship and the crew were forced to de-camp to the ice. Alone in the Antarctic with no way to seek help, the men of the *Endurance* expedition appeared precariously close to becoming actors in another polar tragedy. However, Shackleton led his men on a boat journey to Elephant Island where the

majority of the crew set up a make-shift camp while he and five others began a 900-mile boat journey to South Georgia to seek help. Once they landed on South Georgia they completed the first trek over the South Georgian Mountains in order to reach the whaling station and salvation. On arrival, they were met by two young boys from the whaling community who ran in terror at the sight of the haggard explorers (Butterworth, 2001, p.4). Despite the significant risks involved, the entire crew of the *Endurance* survived the ordeal. It is this story of disaster and survival which forms the basis for the vast majority of children's texts about Shackleton. The *Endurance* was, however, only one of two ships involved in Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. The other ship, *Aurora*, sailed to the Ross Sea to establish a base camp at Cape Evans. The ten-man crew were then to lay depots with fuel and food so that Shackleton's team, which intended to cross the continent from the opposite side departing from Vahsel Bay, would have enough supplies to enable them to complete the trans-Antarctic journey. Unaware that Shackleton never even landed on the Antarctic continent, the crew of the *Aurora* set about laying depots. The crew experienced significant problems when their ship became trapped in ice and was carried away, leaving the ten men stranded on the ice with little food or supplies. In total three of the *Aurora* crew died during their expedition. The majority of texts for adults and children focus only on Shackleton's role in the *Endurance*, and ignore the loss of the *Aurora* crew and the suffering endured by the men as they sought to lay supplies for an expedition that never even begun.[8]

It is Shackleton's role as saviour which most obviously sets him apart from his long-time rival Scott and which has most significantly impacted how the explorer has been remembered. However, the same elements that made the story an engaging tale of survival and endurance were also the elements that caused the narrative to sit uneasily with

[8] For more information on the Ross Sea Party see Richard McElrea & David Harrowfield's 2004 *Polar Castaways: The Ross Sea Party (1914-1917) of Sir Ernest Shackleton* (Christchurch, NZ: Cantebury University Press), and Kelly Tyler-Lewis's 2006 *The Lost Men: The Harrowing Story of Shackleton's Ross Sea Party* (London: Bloomsbury).

contemporary audiences when the expedition returned in 1916. In *South* Shackleton records one of his first questions to the whalers he met after his trek over the mountains of South Georgia to find help:

> 'Tell me when was the war over?' I asked.
>
> 'The war is not over,' he answered. 'Millions are being killed. Europe is mad. The world is mad.' (Shackleton, 2014, p.198)

The events of the First World War ensured that Shackleton's narrative received a very different reception than the tale of disaster and sacrifice penned by Scott. The *Endurance* expedition left London on the 1st of August 1914 heading for Buenos Aires. Seven days later on the 8th of August, Britain declared war on Germany. Upon the outbreak of war Shackleton contacted the Admiralty and put himself and his crew at their disposal. The only response they received was a one-word telegram telling the men to proceed. Alfred Lansing writes, "Two hours later there was a longer wire from Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, stating that the government desired the expedition to go on" (1959, p.32). At the outbreak of war there was no comprehension of the unprecedented nature of the conflict that had just begun and so Shackleton and his crew continued their expedition unaware of the scale of the war that continued in their absence. By the time the *Endurance* crew were finally rescued from Elephant Island in August 1916, the First World War had already dragged on for over two years with hundreds of thousands of casualties on both sides. In August 1916 alone, British troops at the Battle of the Somme had suffered over 158,000 casualties (Small, Westwell and Westwood, 2002, p.933). Later that month, two British cruisers HMS *Nottingham* and HMS *Falmouth* were sunk in the North Sea. Stephanie Barczewski notes that in the context of this unparalleled war:

> Shackleton's decision to proceed with his expedition despite the outbreak of war rankled with many members of the British public. They had forgotten that in

> August 1914 no one expected the war to be nearly as long or as devastating as it had turned out to be. (2007, p.116)

In his own narrative of the expedition, *South,* first published in 1919, Shackleton is clearly aware of the perception that his men had managed to avoid war service. Countering these claims, he writes, "practically every member of the Expedition was employed in one or other branches of the active fighting during the war. Several are still abroad" (2014, p.338). What's more, having survived under seemingly impossible circumstances in the Antarctic some of the crew of the *Endurance* went on to die in the war. Shackleton summarises: "Of the fifty-three men who returned […] three have since been killed and five wounded" (2014, p.326), he then goes on to list individual men from the crew and where and how they served their country. Shackleton dedicated his book to his crew members who lost their lives both in the Antarctic and in the war: "To my comrades who fell in the white warfare of the south and on the red fields of France and Flanders" (2014: n.pag). By connecting the two 'conflicts' Shackleton positions the men who died on the *Aurora* crew as fallen heroes who died for their country, while also underlining the heroic sacrifice of his men in the war. Taken as a whole, these sections of *South* constitute a prolonged defence of himself and his men.

Shackleton's justifications could not change the cultural antipathy towards the *Endurance* expedition. Barczewski argues that the sheer scale of the losses experienced during the First World War changed the perception of death within British society and created a culture uninterested in tales of heroic survival:

> The comprehension of death was an overwhelming need in British culture after 1914, as millions of people suffered the loss of a relative or a close friend. The tragic conclusion to Scott's expedition therefore resonated more profoundly than did the story of Shackleton's successful quest to rescue his men. In the wartime context, Britons reinterpreted Scott's fate as proof that death did indeed have

> meaning. Happy endings, in the Britain of 1916, seemed out of place. (2007, p.116)

The *Endurance* is a story so fundamentally about survival that it seemed incongruous and even distasteful in the context of the huge losses of the First World War.

This changing comprehension of death following the war impacted on the production of children's texts about the two explorers in the early-to-mid twentieth century. From Ladybird books to annotated biographies, there were numerous retellings of the *Terra Nova* narrative for children published in the years after Scott's death. There are remarkably fewer texts focusing on Shackleton or the *Endurance* narrative in the early twentieth century. By the 1960s texts about the *Endurance* for a child audience begin to appear. In 1960 B. Webster Smith published *Sir Ernest Shackleton*, a book about Shackleton's life focusing on the *Endurance* expedition. Later, in 1969, Michael Brown published *Shackleton's Epic Voyage*, a text which was illustrated by prominent illustrator Raymond Briggs. It was not until the late 1990s and early 2000s that books about the explorer began to proliferate.

In recent years, as Robert Scott has come under severe criticism, Shackleton has achieved considerably greater prominence than he experienced within his lifetime. Barczewski argues that the reputations of the two men have followed opposite trajectories. After his death in 1912 Scott became venerated as a national hero and a martyr to science. It is only since the publication of Roland Huntford's damning biography of Scott in 1979 that Scott's fall from grace began. Barczewski notes:

> Shackleton remained in Scott's shadow for decades [after Scott's death], his own accomplishments barely recalled or credited. In more recent years, however the tide has turned. In the late twentieth century, Shackleton came to be regarded as the great leader, the great explorer, the *greater* hero. (2007, p.xii, emphasis in original)

Barczewski locates the stimulus for this change in attitudes towards Shackleton, not in Shackleton's home nations of England or Ireland[9], but in New York. From April 10th to October 11th 1999 the American Museum of Natural History in New York featured an exhibition on Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition and described the events as "one of the greatest tales of survival in expedition history" ("Shackleton", American Museum of Natural History, 2015). Barczewski argues that the exhibition stimulated significant interest in Shackleton and the *Endurance* expedition. This interest is reflected in the growing number of children's texts about Shackleton. Since the late 1990s numerous books have been published in a variety of formats, including William Grill's *Shackleton's Journey* (2014), which won the 2015 Kate Greenaway prize for illustration. Texts such as Michael McCurdy's (1997) *Trapped in the Ice! Shackleton's Amazing Antarctic Adventure*, Meredith Hooper's *Ice Trap! Shackleton's Incredible Expedition* (2000), Christine Butterworth's *Shackleton the Survivor* (2001), Paul Dowswell's 2002 *True Polar Adventures*, and Anita Ganeri's *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Antarctic Expedition* (2015) reflect the continuing interest in the *Endurance* narrative within children's literature, and give some indication of the commonality of approach between many of the authors.

The role of children's literature in the resurgence of interest in Shackleton has not previously been explored. The 1999 exhibition in New York was curated by Caroline Alexander, author of *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* (1997), a book for children about Shackleton's expedition cat, Mrs Chippy, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. It was during Alexander's research for her book on Mrs Chippy that she uncovered numerous previously unpublished images from the *Endurance* expedition and began to consider creating an exhibition from the materials. In an interview conducted as part of this research (see Appendix 3a), Caroline Alexander explains:

[9] Shackleton was born in Kildare, Ireland in 1874. The Shackleton family left Ireland for London in 1884 when Ernest was only 10.

> So, once it became a book I thought, now I've read all these diaries, let me see what I can do to illustrate this book. So, I went through the sketches that were done by one of the sailors, and pictures. But in doing that I discovered that there was this unpublished, disorganised, badly filed collection of photographs at the Royal Geographical Society. So, I came back and got that together into an exhibit, which took some time. But then at short notice the museum said to me, we have to have a publication to accompany the exhibit, we always do. And they needed it in something like 5 months. And I sort of hit the ground running, but what unfolded was the book *The Endurance*, the grown-up book if you like, the factual book. (pers. comm., January 16, 2016)

Alexander concludes: "Mrs Chippy paved the way for everything else […] Really if I had not done Mrs Chippy none of the rest of it would have happened" (pers. comm., January 16, 2016). What is particularly fascinating about this sequence of events is not only the fact that a children's book and children's author were instrumental in the recent resurgence of interest in Shackleton, but also that the book that Alexander wrote to accompany the 1999 exhibition, *The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition*, provides a straightforward retelling of the *Endurance* narrative, whereas her work for children is much more subversive and encourages a reconsideration of the Shackleton myth, and so, it appears that Alexander was establishing a myth for an adult audience, only to subvert it for her child readers.

This chapter examines eleven texts for children that retell the story of Shackleton's *Endurance*. Like the *Terra Nova* narratives for children these texts include both prose fiction and illustrated texts. However, in contrast to the *Terra Nova* narratives, the primary texts examined in this chapter were all published in the second half of the twentieth century, with the majority published since 1990. There is a clear narrative pattern to the retellings which echoes the pattern of the *Terra Nova* stories: the narratives begin by revealing the eventual

survival of the hero and his crew before returning to describe their prolonged ordeal eventually circling back to the point of survival and rescue foreshadowed in the beginning.

Throughout this chapter I demonstrate that, in contrast to the Scott stories which draw heavily on Scott's own narrative, the children's *Endurance* narratives rely instead on second-hand accounts of Shackleton's expedition. I argue that the Shackleton *Endurance* narrative can be seen as a siege narrative and examine the combative relationship that is established between the explorers and the wild landscape within the children's retellings. The chapter investigates the representation of gender in the stories, focusing on the feminisation of the ship within the *Endurance* narratives and contrasting the representation of gender in the Scott and Shackleton narratives. I consider how the "Heroic Era" chronotope appears within the *Endurance* narratives, and finally, through an examination of the changing cultural perceptions of death the chapter explores the importance of survival within the children's retellings of the *Endurance* narrative.

Shackleton as Author

Unlike Scott's self-generated legend, it is primarily the narratives of others that have turned Shackleton and his *Endurance* expedition into myth, notably the biographies of Alfred Lansing (1959), and Huntford (1985), and the American exhibition which propelled the explorer to international fame. Shackleton seemed uninterested in finalising his narrative *South* for publication. Michael Smith notes that Shackleton was "curiously indifferent to the book and left it almost entirely in the hands of ghostwriter Saunders" (2014, p.391). Such indifference was no doubt rooted, at least in part, in the knowledge that he would never make any money from the book having sacrificed rights to the future earnings of his expedition narrative in the early scramble for funds (Smith, 2014, p.391). While Shackleton's *South* contains the bare bones of the contemporary tale of the *Endurance*, it is a largely defensive

text, providing lengthy explanations for the decision to proceed despite the outbreak of the First World War and the route taken towards the Antarctic which ignored reports of heavy ice. *South* also contains six chapters focused on the trials of the expedition's second ship *Aurora*, and its crew, three of whom died during the expedition. It is here, in the harrowing descriptions of the suffering of the *Aurora* crew as they fought to lay depots for a crew who never even landed on the Antarctic continent, that the differences between Shackleton's own text and the archetypal myth of the *Endurance* become most overt. Shackleton spends roughly thirty per cent of his text explaining and applauding the work of the *Aurora* crew, and his regret at the loss of the men is palpable. He dedicates the book in part to those men from the *Aurora* crew who died in the Antarctic. This is not consistent with the contemporary myth of Shackleton, the great leader who never lost a man, and as such it is largely absent from the children's retellings of the *Endurance* narratives. Janice Marriott makes the rather extraordinary claim that:

> Every member of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition lived to tell the tale. Their amazing survival was largely due to the men's good humour, resourcefulness, and co-operative spirit. […] But above all, their survival was due to the leadership of Sir Ernest Shackleton, whose courage, determination, and faith provided the example and inspiration they needed to endure the almost unendurable. (2000, p.28)

Given that the *Aurora* was part of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, this claim is patently false. Michael McCurdy in *Trapped in the Ice: Shackleton's Incredible Antarctic Expedition* writes, "Shack finally did it – and without any loss of life" (1997, p.38), and McCurdy does not mention the crew of the *Aurora* at all in his text. Even in texts where the deaths are referenced, they are often an afterthought or are quickly brushed aside. Anita Ganeri's 2015 *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Antarctic Expedition* typifies the flippant

approach of the children's texts to this element of the story: "Despite many hardships and the death of three members of the party, they had carried out their duties of laying supplies across the ice" (p.39). The reader is offered many pages detailing the trials of the *Endurance* crew and their struggles to survive, but the fate of the *Aurora* crew is summed up in one sentence. The deaths of the men on the *Aurora* are problematic given Shackleton's status as survivor and saviour and so they are omitted or obscured in many children's texts which retell the *Endurance* narrative.

In contrast with the extensive quotations from Scott in the *Terra Nova* narratives for children, there are very few direct citations of Shackleton in the children's retellings of the *Endurance*. Instead comments from Shackleton's crew are used to build up a picture of the great leader. B. Webster Smith cites Frank Worsley saying: "It was due solely to Shackleton's incessant care of them that no one died" (1960, p.60). Christine Butterworth in *Shackleton the Survivor* quotes Shackleton's second-in command Frank Wild: "For qualities of leadership, ability to organize, courage in the face of danger […] Shackleton must be ranked as the first explorer of his age" (2001, p.4). There is one observation about Shackleton which can be seen to encapsulate the current attitude towards the explorer and his relationship to his contemporaries; writing in his classic narrative of the *Terra Nova* expedition, Apsley Cherry Garrard provides a comparative assessment of the most prominent Antarctic explorers:

> For a joint scientific and geographical piece of organization, give me Scott; for a Winter Journey, Wilson; for a dash to the Pole and nothing else, Amundsen: and if I am in the devil of a hole and want to get out of it, give me Shackleton every time. (2013, p.vi)

Here we see the core of the Shackleton myth, the explorer as hero, saviour, and leader, rescuing his men from near certain death. This is not the only place where this characterisation of the explorer appears, and Cherry-Garrard is not the only explorer to which

this succinct summation is attributed. A remarkably similar passage appears in Anita Ganeri's *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Antarctic Expedition*: "For scientific leadership, give me Scott; for swift and efficient travel, Amundsen; but when you are in a hopeless situation, when there seems no way out, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton" (Ganeri, 2015, p.43). Ganeri attributes the reference to Raymond Priestley, a crew member on the *Endurance*. Michael Smith, in his biography of Shackleton, also cites Priestley as the author, as does Leonard Sweet in his 2004 text *Summoned to Lead*. However, as Sweet acknowledges, Alexandra Shackleton (Shackleton's granddaughter) in her foreword to Kim Heacox's, *Shackleton: The Antarctic Challenge* (1996) attributes this same observation to James Boyd Adams (as cited in Heacox, 1999, p.6). Here, three contemporaries of Shackleton are all credited with authoring one of the defining appraisals of the explorer. The uncertain origins of one of the most recognisable assessments of Shackleton's character simply adds to the mythic nature of our contemporary understanding of Shackleton and his most famous expedition.

Despite the lack of direct quotations from Shackleton, there are some clear ways the explorer has helped to shape our current understanding of the expedition, most notably in his desire to position the story as a battle between man and his environment. From the very opening of his narrative, Shackleton purposefully establishes an oppositional relationship between the explorers and the Antarctic landscape. Matthew Teorey argues:

> As a veteran Antarctic explorer, Shackleton expected his ships to be ice-bound periodically, and in other texts he does not dramatize this type of situation. For instance, in *The Heart of the Antarctic*, which chronicles his 1908 – 1909 expedition, Shackleton describes the ice as an abstract object. However, throughout *South*, he sets a different tone by using a style that suggests he is writing an adventure story; the natural environment is portrayed as a living,

> hostile presence. On the first page, he writes, 'What welcome was the Weddell Sea preparing for us?' (2004, p.278)

Edited for publication following the failure of the expedition to achieve their original goal, Shackleton's expeditionary account changes the parameters for success from the outset and ensures that the expedition will not by judged on their original intent, but on their ability to survive in, and overcome, a hostile environment. Like Scott who crafted his own adventure narrative drawing on children's literature, Shackleton, too, reshapes events in the form of an adventure narrative and positions the Antarctic as the antagonist from the start.

Echoing Shackleton, texts written about the expedition for adults and children vilify the Antarctic landscape. In his influential account of the expedition, Alfred Lansing describes the Antarctic seas that Shackleton was forced to contend with in a small lifeboat when he went in search of rescue:

> But the sea is a different sort of enemy. Unlike the land, where courage and the simple will to endure can often see a man through, the struggle against the sea is an act of physical combat, and there is no escape. It is a battle against a tireless enemy in which man never actually wins; the most that he can hope for is not to be defeated. (1959, p.221)

Drawing on Lansing's account, the children's texts similarly depict a hostile Antarctic landscape and position survival as a viable form of success in this space. The terminology of battle is frequently used to describe the relationship between the explorers and their surroundings. B. Webster Smith summarises Shackleton's accomplishment through the repetition of Shackleton's family motto: "By Endurance We Conquer", in his narrative *Sir Ernest Shackleton*. The object being conquered is the Antarctic landscape itself and Shackleton is depicted as subjugator of this wild and savage place. Michael Brown in *Shackleton's Epic Voyage* summarises the conflict writing: "By his courage Captain

Shackleton had led his men through the perils of ice, thirst, wind and storm. *They had challenged the sea and won*" (1969, n.pag, emphasis added). Both Brown and Webster Smith's texts were published in the years immediately following the publication of Lansing's account of the *Endurance* expedition. These texts can be seen to echo many of the themes developed in Lansing's text. This is particularly evident in their descriptions of the Antarctic as a malevolent wilderness. Contemporary texts continue to create a combative relationship between the explorers and their environment. Christine Butterworth in *Shackleton The Survivor* (2001) writes "For 17 days the crew aboard the James Caird *battled* against hurricane winds and freezing seas" (2001, p.22, emphasis added). The words "battle", "challenge" and "victory" repeatedly position the environment as the antagonist in these tales. From the time the ship becomes trapped in the ice, the story of the *Endurance* is transformed into a protracted battle between the explorers and their environment. The explorers are constantly under attack, besieged, rendered homeless and forced into a direct encounter with the Antarctic ice.

The *Endurance* as Siege Narrative

Focusing on this period of entrapment in the ice, Matthew Teorey argues that the story of the *Endurance* is best considered along the lines of a captivity narrative. Teorey specifically references Mary Rowlandson's *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) arguing, "Both authors treat their activity as a sacred, adventurous mission into the wilderness – a mission they expected would provide wealth and recognition for their community as well as assert their right to study, map, and conquer a 'savage' and 'virgin' territory" (Teorey, 2004: 275-6). The comparison Teorey draws in his article between the narratives of Shackleton and Rowlandson is of significant interest in understanding the depiction of the Antarctic landscape in Shackleton's narrative, and how this has informed the

children's texts about the expedition. Teorey underlines the way the Antarctic is positioned firmly as the enemy within Shackleton's *South*. The landscape is othered as "savage" and "wild". Teorey argues that the men engage in a battle with the ice, during which "the ice murders the ship" (2004, p.279), and notes the use of literary conventions "to present the ice as a sentient, human-like foil against which he and his men struggle" (2004, p.279). Through portraying the ice as a sentient being, Shackleton can situate the destruction of the ship as a premeditated murder and his crew as the next potential victims. This implies that through escape and survival they have outwitted their "human-like" opponent.

While Teorey's comparison between Shackleton and Rowlandson's narratives helps elucidate the way in which the Antarctic is 'othered' and positioned as an aggressive antagonist in the *Endurance* narrative, one element that is overlooked in this analysis is the place of the ship as a home space. Conventionally, within captivity narratives, the prisoner/protagonist is removed from their home or place of safety and is taken to a hostile environment, as is evident in Mary Rowlandson's text. In the *Endurance* narratives, while the ship is trapped in the Antarctic ice the men remain within the safety of the vessel. The boundaries of the ship represent the limits of the home and a protective force separating the men from the Antarctic outside. Utilising the terminology of Yi Fu Tuan, the ship here is the "homeplace" while the Antarctic landscape is "alien space". Tuan specifically references the polar landscapes as extreme representations of alien space, therefore in this space the ship, as a homeplace, gains additional significance due to lack of mediating space or 'home spaces' between the homeplace and the adjacent alien space. The ship as homeplace has powerful real and symbolic value for the explorers. While the ship remains undamaged it is simply trapped but the homeplace as sanctuary remains, and Shackleton's goal to cross the Antarctic continent was delayed but not destroyed. This function of the ship as homeplace is particularly evident in the children's texts through the surprisingly domestic pictures of life

aboard the ship during the period of entrapment in the ice. Despite the fact that becoming trapped in the ice resulted in the failure of the expedition and imperilled the lives of all of the crew, this period of entrapment stands apart from the rest of the narrative as a time of relative calm and domesticity. In illustrated versions of the story, these passages are often represented using sepia tones. William Grill's *Shackleton's Journey* is indicative of how the interior of the ship is shown as a space of comparative warmth and comfort in sharp contrast with the wild environment outside. In the image below (Figure 3) the crew celebrate Midwinter's Day, the darkest day of the year when the sun would barely rise and yet the colours used to depict this scene are warm tones and the men are shown merrily celebrating, surrounded by Union Jacks, food, and drink. In contrast, the image of the Antarctic below shows a confusion of cold blue, black and white. These two companion images reinforce the ship's role as protector of the crew, and portray the convivial atmosphere that existed between the crew during their time on the *Endurance* ship.

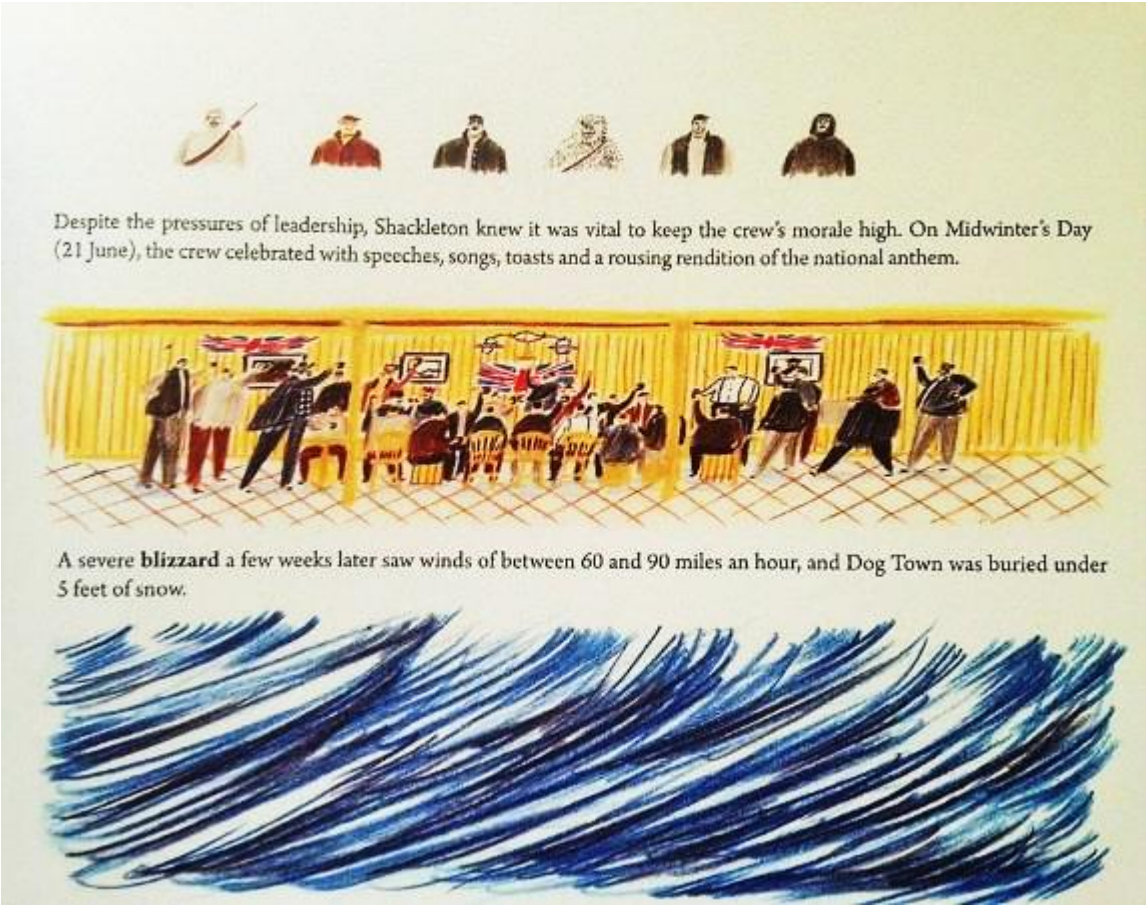


Figure 3: Contrasting the safe interior of the ship with the wild Antarctic outside in William Grill's, *Shackleton's Journey*, 2014 p.28.

In other narratives, too, the interior of the ship is depicted in total contrast to the Antarctic environment outside. Inside the besieged ship life is routine and comforting. Meredith Hooper discusses how the men "played cards, and practical jokes, and were bored" (2000, p.5). In *Shackleton the Survivor* Butterworth describes the Christmas celebrations of the crew while they were stuck in the ice: "Despite the fact that it was midsummer in Antarctica, on Christmas Day a freezing gale raged round the ship, but the men were snug below deck. They opened presents from home, and had a Christmas feast" (2001, p.10). The word "snug" is associations with warmth and safety while "Christmas feast" may be intended to invoke childhood 'midnight feasts' rather than formal adult events. The cumulative effect of descriptions such as these is to represent the ship as a refuge within the wild Antarctic environment.

In the *Endurance* narratives, the ship plays the role of a homeplace by providing comfort and shelter but it also provides an important link between the explorers and their homeplace back in Britain. Jane Suzanne Carroll in *Landscape in Children's Literature* (2011), describes the home as "a place of profound attachment" and argues that within literature "the relationship between location and identity reaches its climax in the representation of the home which becomes a logical extension and reflection of the self" (2011, p.20). The descriptions of Christmas celebrations, the nationalistic bunting that appears in illustrations such as those in Grill's *Shackleton's Journey*, the familiar foods, and the clear social structure of the ship, are elements of British culture which the crew have been able to import into the Antarctic. Thus, the expedition is positioned within a British naval tradition, and specifically within a long-standing tradition of British polar exploration. The attack on the ship is not only an attack on the explorers' place of safety; it is also an attack on their home and traditions. The impending destruction of the ship threatens to impair their ability to perform their cultural identity within the landscape through destroying the props which help make this performance possible.

Based on the close connection between the ship and the men's cultural identity and ideas of home, I argue that the *Endurance* should be viewed as a siege narrative. This view not only underscores the important function of the ship as a homeplace for the explorers, but also highlights the battle-like dynamic which is established between the Antarctic and the explorers. Shackleton is positioned as a general whose base and crew are encircled by the enemy. The Antarctic is the foreign adversary which is attacking the boundaries/walls of the ship. What follows is in fact an extended siege during which the homeplace is continually attacked by the Antarctic 'enemy' outside. Viewing the *Endurance* as a siege narrative also helps to elucidate the "narrativization of space" within the texts. John McCullough argues that siege narratives are notable for the way that they conceptualise space. Using the example of

D.W. Griffith's film *The Battle at Elderbrush Gulch* McCullough describes how the "spaces have gendered and racialized characteristics, and that the 'inside' spaces tend to be feminized and designated as 'white' spaces, while the 'outside' spaces are threatening, masculinized, and racially heterogeneous" (2014, p.24) There is explicit narrativization of space in the *Endurance* stories for children as the internal spaces of the ship become strictly codified as home spaces which are feminized and depicted as providing sanctuary from the aggressive, 'alien' landscape which is besieging the ship. While the crew are ensconced in the ship they are safe and warm, and food is plentiful, as evidenced in the texts in the sepia images and through references to feasts, and the use of words such as "snug" to describe the men inside the ship. The use of feminine pronouns and the representations of the ship as a source of safety and much-needed provisions enhance the images of the ship as a maternal creature which has sought to protect Shackleton and his crew. Paul Dowswell in *True Polar Adventures* writes that during the voyage: "Puppies were born, much to everyone's delight" (2002, p.85), and one of the iconic images of the *Endurance* expedition features Irish seaman Tom Crean holding four of the puppies (Figure 4, below). Descriptions and images such as these demonstrate that, in addition to providing a refuge for the explorers, the ship also supports new life, further underlining the maternal role of the *Endurance*. The crew are positioned as the gallant defenders of their mother/ship and yet, in the end, they are powerless to protect her from the aggressive wild landscape.

Figure 4: Tom Crean on the *Endurance* holding some of the puppies born during the expedition.

Shackleton's diary was relatively silent on the actual sinking of the ship. For him it is a moment almost beyond description. Christine Butterworth records Shackleton's response: "'She's gone, boys,' Shackleton said quietly […] his entry in the log that night was short: 'I cannot write about it'" (Butterworth, 2001, p.12). However, many of the texts which retell this story are not so sparing with their descriptions. Alfred Lansing's account is extensive and filled with violence:

> Forward, where the worst of the onslaught was concentrated, the ice was inundating her. It piled higher and higher against her bows as she repelled each new wave, until gradually it mounted to her bulwarks, then crashed across the deck, overwhelming her with a crushing load that pushed her head down even deeper. Thus held, she was even more at the mercy of the floes driving against her flanks. (1959, p.20)

Lansing's description of the sinking of the ship is disturbingly akin to an account of a rape, the feminised ship held firm while the ice seeks to penetrate "against her flanks". Many of the children's authors, even female authors writing in the early twenty-first century, use similar language to describe the destruction of the ship. Meredith Hooper in *Ice Trap!* writes:

> *Endurance* was heaved high, thrown on one side, then righted herself. But bit by bit her strong thick timbers buckled, bent, then splintered and cracked under the terrible roaring pressure. Day after day the ship groaned like a living thing. The dogs howled. The men watched, hopeless. (2000, p.6)

In a similar vein, Christine Butterworth describes the final moments of the battle between the ship and the ice:

> The men felt as if the ship was being squeezed to death. Her timbers shook and cracked like pistol shots. The iron plates of the engine room floor buckled and twisted. The ship was leaking badly, and teams of men exhausted themselves pumping icy water out of her. They could not beat the ice. (2001, p.12)

The prolonged descriptions of the feminised ship's destruction seem to eroticise female suffering. The Antarctic relentlessly tortures the stricken ship, which is described "groaning", "shaking" and struggling to survive the onslaught. The vulnerability and penetrability of the female body is highlighted as the boundaries of the feminised ship are "buckled, bent" and broken.

There are fascinating parallels to be drawn between the feminisation of space in these texts and in the retellings of the Scott *Terra Nova* narrative. In the Scott narratives, the Antarctic is positioned as a form of she-demon who stalks and murders the explorers. This is woman at her most villainous: life-negating rather than life-producing, strong, malevolent, and defiantly unsubmissive. This challenging form of landscape femininity is punished in the texts which celebrates the 'conquering' of the landscape. The Shackleton stories for children

contain a vision of femininity which exists in total opposition to this villainous womanhood. The landscape is not feminised in the Shackleton narratives for children. Instead the ship takes female form and is presented as a kind of providential, "fecund mother" figure (Adams & Gruetzner Robins, 2000, p.2) in the texts offering sustenance and sanctuary to Shackleton's crew. The scenes where the ship is penetrated by the Antarctic ice would seem to position the landscape as masculine, aggressively attacking the feminised ship, but this gendering is implicit and no gendered pronouns are used to describe the landscape in the *Endurance* texts. The contrasting images of femininity and motherhood in these two central Antarctic narratives for children conform to the archetypal good mother/bad mother dichotomy. In the Shackleton narratives, the connection between the good mother and home is literalised in the representation of the ship as simultaneously mother/home. David Rudd has noted the importance within children's literature of the role of the mother as provider or withholder of food (2000, p.103). Similarly. Ann Alston argues that, "The majority of adult females in children's literature are categorised by their ability to feed; the good woman feeds the child and is loved, whereas the bad woman seduces the child through food but later withholds it, and consequently is rendered evil" (2008, p.111). In these tales, where the availability of food is key to the protagonist's survival, the ship's role as protector and provider of food in the *Endurance* texts clearly aligns it with the "good mother", while in the *Terra Nova* narratives, the Antarctic is the "bad mother" threatening to withhold or destroy both food and sanctuary, and eventually killing the explorers. In assessing the depiction of femininity in "Heroic Era" narratives there are obvious and considerable issues with the representation of woman as she-demon in the Scott tales. However, the seemingly positive representation of woman as home/sanctuary in these narratives is equally problematic. Through assigning a female gender to the ship these texts for children create a gender dynamic where the explorers are heroic defenders of the helpless feminised ship. The ship performs a conservative mothering role

while at the same time being subject to the will of the explorers. The attack on the ship is also described in painstaking detail in many of the narratives for children that focus on the suffering of the ship. The need to move beyond these stereotypical images of women has been a focus of feminist writing for many years, from Virginia Woolf's speech entitled "Professions for Women" (1931) and her insistence on the need to kill "the angel in the house" to Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) and their deconstruction of the binary images of angel-woman and woman as monster. However, in this genre of writing for children where women are so overtly absent, the out-dated and simplistic images of woman as either angel or demon persist and sit uncomfortably beside prolonged celebrations of British male heroism.

The Consumption of the Ship

In the *Endurance* narratives, the landscape is the primary antagonist, continually attacking the ship. The wooden sides of the ship are the only protection between the men and the freezing ice outside. Once the boundaries of the ship are breached as the ship is crushed, the siege of the *Endurance* is ended and the ship is literally devoured by the Antarctic ice. The Antarctic's role as predator is complete with this act of consumption. Shackleton is forced to remove his crew to the ice, where they too are at risk of being devoured by the landscape and the wild Antarctic animals. Butterworth remarks:

> The men were hunted too. To some Antarctic animals, a man looked rather like their normal prey. A three-metre long sea-leopard attacked one man. Wild, Shackleton's second-in-command, shot it. There was constant danger from killer whales, which could swim up under an ice floe and tip seals into the water, and might do the same to the men. (2001, p.16)

Dowswell notes that during the first boat journey when the entire crew sailed to Elephant Island, they were constantly hunted by Antarctic animals:

> As the men tried to sleep they would be disturbed by killer whales, which blew air through their blow holes 'like suddenly escaping steam'. The whales brushed against the boats, threatening to sever the ropes that held them together. Occasionally they would peer out of the water, presenting the crew with a huge, dark maw and sharp, white, gleaming teeth. Men wept in despair, and the threat of death hung in the air. (2002, p.92)

The whales that populated the Antarctic whaling narratives discussed in Chapter One reappear here, not as sources of food or valuable blubber, but as predators, while the men have been converted to prey. The landscape too is depicted as seeking to consume the men whole. In one incident that is repeated in many of the children's texts about the *Endurance* expedition, an iceberg on which the men have camped fractures during the night. Ganeri writes: "But at 11pm disaster struck. The ice cracked beneath one of the tents and Holness fell into the water in his sleeping bag. He was hauled out, freezing but alive" (2015, p.25). Other texts describe Shackleton as the single-handed saviour of the unfortunate sailor. Butterworth describes the incident writing:

> At 8.00p.m. they pitched camp on another large ice floe. Shackleton kept watch. In the middle of the night, a crack opened up under a tent. Hearing cries, Shackleton saw a shape struggling in the water. It was someone in a sleeping bag. Reaching down, Shackleton hauled him up onto the ice. Seconds later the two edges of the ice came together with a booming thud, just where the man had been. (2001, p.18)

The ice, like jaws, opens to devour its prey, and then closes, trapping anything left behind. This episode highlights the mutability of the Antarctic landscape and the uncertain distinction

between the landscape and the seascape in the texts. The unnerving ability of the Antarctic ice to completely obliterate the ship through consumption, leaving no trace of the home that had been created there, is echoed in the near-consumption of the explorer. In the Scott stories, the importance of leaving a mark on the landscape is highlighted through the emphasis placed on the construction of the cairn to mark the resting place of the dead explorers. Their bodies, too, are seen as creating an indelible mark on the landscape which is then positioned as a victory over the environment. In the Shackleton stories, however, the Antarctic ice refuses to be tarnished. It changes and moves and resists the efforts of the explorers to retain their own home or to establish new places of safety. The incident detailed above is disturbing not only because a man came near to losing his life, but because it represents another attack on a home-like space, at a time when, through sleep, the explorer was particularly vulnerable. Tuan argues that the key threat of alien space is "the loss of self" (1993, p.155). The loss of the ship is effectively a loss of self, as it results in the loss of the homeplace and all that this represents. Importantly, this loss occurs in an alien landscape where there are no mediating home spaces between the homeplace and the alien space beyond. The attacks on the explorers by Antarctic animals, and the dangers posed by moving pack-ice and hidden crevasses, represent the continuing risk of loss of self in this alien space and the impossibility of creating lasting homeplaces in this environment. It is a story which underlines the hostility of the landscape to human habitation by detailing repeated attacks on the home spaces in the narrative. The only mark of success can be escape.

Man in the Wilderness

As soon as the ship has been destroyed, the goal shifts from exploration to survival. It is in this period, after the sinking of the ship, when all of the trappings of modernity have been removed, that Shackleton and his crew fully realise their heroic potential in these tales.

Shackleton had departed from the very centre of the British Empire equipped with state-of-the-art polar exploratory apparatus. Shackleton's narrative *South* recorded: "It [the expedition] will take 100 dogs with sledges, and two motor sledges with aerial propellers. The equipment will embody everything that the experience of the leader and his expert advisers can suggest" (Shackleton, 2014, p.xvi). Grill's *Shackleton's Journey* contains detailed illustrations of the complex design of the ship and the equipment taken on board (2014, p.9-10). The children's narratives describe how all of this equipment, so thoughtfully assembled by expert advisers, was abandoned, destroyed, or consumed by the landscape. Basic survival and navigational equipment is all that the men have left of their once-impressive stores. Meredith Hooper describes the simple supplies that Shackleton and his men took for their final pioneering journey over the mountains of South Georgia: "They carried a length of rope, the carpenter's axe, a cooker and matches, a watch and a compass, and enough food for six meals in three socks" (2000, p.17). Grill details how Worsley, the ship's skipper, "navigated well under the harsh conditions using only a pocket compass" (2014, p.44). These are stories that detail the stripping away of all modern equipment and technology until Shackleton faces the adversarial landscape in a simple wooden boat, with only five companions and basic supplies. It is a story not of man's technological supremacy over wilderness, but rather one of man's ability to survive in wild spaces in the most primitive of modes.

Paul Dowswell in *True Polar Adventures* notes that Shackleton had not always excelled within modern industrialised British society. Dowswell cites a conversation between the explorer and his sister in which Shackleton confessed: "Sometimes I think I'm no good at anything, except being away in the wilds" (2002, p.82). It is only when removed from the mundanities of modern life that Shackleton could realise his heroic potential. For many years, wilderness landscapes have appeared to provide an alternative to industrialised societies. Roderick Nash argues that in the Romantic period, "Wilderness appealed to those bored or

disgusted with man and his works" (1982, p.47). Endless technological progress appeared to create a world in which man was increasingly isolated from the natural environment, and wilderness came to symbolise 'authentic' nature, which stood in opposition to the increasingly materialistic world of the cities. Simon Schama records that, "The founding fathers of modern environmentalism, Henry David Thoreau and John Muir, promised that 'in wildness is the preservation of the world'" and promised that wilderness "would be the antidote for the poisons of industrial society" (1995, p.7). For these men, wilderness promised to redeem what modern life had destroyed.

The appeal of the wilderness has endured into the modern era. Mark Gallagher in *Action Figures: Men, Action Films, and Contemporary Narratives* (2006) notes that the late 1990s saw renewed interest in the non-fiction adventure genre, specifically tales of disaster and survival in wilderness locations (p.1). Gallagher focuses on Jon Krakauer's 1997 *Into Thin Air*, which describes a disastrous attempt to climb Mount Everest. Gallagher argues that texts such as these act as "a riposte to a capitalist, consumerist society that avowedly strips men's everyday lives of variety and excitement (and by extension, of virility)" (p.2). Gallagher argues that western "post-industrialist capitalist" societies "[do] not require men to perform spectacular feats of heroic activity on a regular basis, if ever. Within this culture, accounts of survival amid extreme danger affirm the possibility of unmediated experiences of physical punishment and triumph" (p.22). The *Endurance* narratives for children can be understood as part of this broader interest in non-fiction tales of survival and masculine adventure, and can be seen as the ultimate "riposte to capitalist, consumerist" societies. The Antarctic in these texts is an environment where man can showcase his inherent skills and heroic abilities. Marriott sets the scene for the reader at the opening of her text:

> Twenty-eight men stood in the middle of the frozen ocean and watched as their ship sank beneath the ice. Their last link with home, comfort, and normal life was

> gone. All around them, there was nothing but ice. There was no inhabited land for hundreds of kilometres. The temperature was way below freezing, day and night. They were completely alone. This was the beginning of one of the most incredible stories of survival in human history. (2000, p.3)

Dowswell describes that during their trek over the South Georgia mountains "McNeish had fitted screws from the *James Caird* to their boots, to act as crude crampons", and they used rope to create "an improvised toboggan" (2002, p.96). In these narratives, the ability of the crew to excel in the Antarctic demonstrates that men from capitalist societies, who are not commonly called upon to complete feats or strength or endurance, can still do so when the necessity arises and speaks to the latent heroism of the British male. The stories simultaneously show that the British explorers had access to the best technology and equipment, therefore demonstrating their technological and economic power, while also proving that these supplies were unnecessary. The crew reveal their ability to improvise and to conquer the wilderness using only basic equipment and their own ingenuity. The British establishment's distaste for dog-teams in Antarctic travel, as described in Chapter Two, is pertinent here. For the Royal Geographical Society in the early 1900s, and for children's authors writing in the early twenty-first century, it is important that the British explorers engaged in a direct encounter with the wild landscape, demonstrating the human, and specifically male, ability to 'conquer' wilderness without any mediating factors such as dogs or technology.

In his article, "Making Boys Appear: The Masculinity of Children's Fiction", Perry Nodelman argues:

> Masculinity is often understood as not being a form of dress – as resistance to the act of putting on costumes or being repressed by conventional roles […]

> Masculinity is taken to be somehow natural and free – the state one achieves by resisting societal norms and being one's true self. (2002, p.1-2)

The Shackleton stories perpetuate these myths of masculinity. They demonstrate that man, or at least British men, when forced to abandon all of the trappings of civilisation, reveal their inherent heroism, which is rooted in a stereotypical image of masculinity. Nodelman argues that it is vital to investigate how books for children "help boys and girls, both consciously and unconsciously, to develop a dangerously repressive sense of what it means to be desirably masculine" (2002, p.2). While the absence of women from the "Heroic Era" stories, when combined with the feminisation of the landscape and ships, is deeply problematic, the restrictive images of masculinity which appear in the Shackleton *Endurance* stories and the Scott *Terra Nova* narratives are similarly challenging. Writing in 2002, John Stephens notes

> in recent literature and film addressing preadult audiences, masculinity has emerged as an increasingly overt theme. Of particular note here is the propensity for such texts to engage in attempted social intervention by privileging variants of a "sensitive male" schema (or postfeminist masculinity) and pejorating the hegemonic masculinity associated with patriarchy and against which preferred masculinities are depicted. (2002, p.xi)

Stephens asserts that some modern texts such as Chris Crutcher's *Ironman* (1995) "incorporates alternative masculinities" (2002, p.xiii) as a means of undermining totalising hegemonic masculinity within the action and adventure genre. In the "Heroic Era" narratives there is no such accommodation made for alternative forms of masculinity. Both the Scott and Shackleton stories foreground a conservative image of masculinity which is based in male physicality, emotional stoicism, and the ability to endure suffering. This is true for stories written for children in the early twentieth century and those published over a century later.

The focus on adult male heroism is particularly interesting in relation to male child readers. Stephens asserts:

> A problem for boys, both in narrative fictions and in the world, is that this dominant form [of masculinity] appears simultaneously to propose a schema for behavior and to insist on their subordination as children, to conflate agency with hegemonic masculinity, and to disclose that, for them, such agency is illusory. (2002, p.ix-x)

The Scott and Shackleton stories seem to promise that power and heroism lie within the reach of male readers, who should emulate the heroic protagonists in order to achieve the agency described in the tales. However, they also tell the male child reader that, as a child, they, like the women and girls omitted from the stories, can only be onlookers, rather than full acting subjects in these stories. The potential agency which the stories promise is theoretical, whereas the denial of agency is tangible as it relates to the current lives of the child readers. The whaling stories for children presented child protagonists moving towards adulthood, in contrast the "Heroic Era" narratives focus on fully-formed masculinity which demonstrates rather than develops its inherent skills and strength. This creates a clear division between the heroic characters upon whom the books focus, and child readers who are explicitly excluded from the opportunity to see themselves in these narratives.

Death and Survival

In the century that has elapsed between Shackleton's return in the midst of the First World War and the modern resurgence of interest in the explorer, there have been considerable changes in the cultural conception of death within Britain. Changing attitudes towards death were highlighted in Philip Ariès's seminal study, *Western Attitudes Toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present* first published in 1974. Ariès argued there had been a seismic shift

in the way death was understood and perceived in Western culture: in the years before and leading into the Middle Ages death was "tame" but in the mid-nineteenth century there occurred "a brutal revolution in traditional ideas and feelings", which eventually led to our contemporary culture of "forbidden death" which seeks to deny or delay death (1974, p.85). Despite facing criticism for the lack of cultural specificity in his work and the focus on the upper classes, Ariès's focus on "forbidden death" in the twentieth century has been particularly influential and is echoed by many more recent commentators. John Stephenson in *Death, Grief and Mourning: Individual and Social Relations* (1985) argues that there has been a movement from an age of "sacred death" to one of "secular death" and finally "avoided death" arguing within contemporary western society: "we numb ourselves to death's existence, allowing it into our consciousness only as distant, nonthreatening, abstract death" (1985, p.44). Michael Kearl focuses on the use of language to abstract from the actualities of death. Kearle similarly argues that we now "live in a culture in which *dead* is a four-letter word, and four-letter words are often obscene […] Our dislike of saying that someone is dead reveals the profoundness of our death denials" (1989, p.31). Drawing on the concept of "forbidden death" Pat Jalland argues that the First World War was a major turning point in the cultural conception of death and that the obsession with death led to "repression and denial" in the years following the war (1996, p.380). The intense focus on death and the public need to understand death in the post-war period was eventually transformed into a culture which was similarly occupied with death but now this occupation took the form of "death denial". Kathryn James, in *Death, Gender and Sexuality in Adolescent Literature* (2009) asserts that while death is no longer the primary cultural taboo in Britain as Geoffrey Gorer argued in the 1950s, "the ideology associated with death in contemporary Western society nevertheless often implies that, in theory, death is preventable. In this sense, death is constructed in terms of failure" (2009, p.25). James also highlights the contemporary adversarial approach taken

towards death in young adult literature where "death can be seen as 'an enemy to be conquered'" (2009, p.25). It is this attitude towards death which is prevalent in the Shackleton stories for children. James argues that within the last thirty years "death's presence in books for children of all ages has increased markedly" (2009, p.3). Just like the Scott stories, death is a central theme of the Shackleton *Endurance* narratives. It is the knowledge of Scott's death, and the deaths of others who perished in the Antarctic, that gives meaning to the defiance of death in the *Endurance* narratives and ensures that the survival of Shackleton and his crew is described as "amazing" (McCurdy 1997) and "incredible" (Hooper, 2000; Ganeri 2015) in the titles of the children's stories. Many children's texts about the *Endurance* take survival and the defiance of death as their central theme. Butterworth indicates her position in her title: *Shackleton the Survivor*. Butterworth introduces the text saying: "The story of his survival and the survival of his men has become an Antarctic legend" (2001, p.5). Ganeri similarly writes: "Shackleton's bravery and leadership skills have been recognised as truly heroic and the story of the *Endurance* expedition has become one of the greatest survival stories" (2015, p.42). Hooper calls the story "one of the greatest stories of rescue and survival ever" (2000, p.22), while Marriott declares the *Endurance* to be "one of the most incredible stories of survival in human history" (2000, p.3). Again and again, these authors return to survival, because the explorers' survival marks an escape from near-certain death and resonates with a culture in which death, like the wild landscape, is an "enemy to be conquered".

Shackleton's story of survival gains particular relevance within the Antarctic context. Zygmunt Bauman writes that contemporary western societies seek to defy death because death represents the limits of man's control. In the face of rapid advancements in the medical sciences and the increasing ability of man to control his natural environment, death stands contrary to the narrative of human domination of the world:

> Of all adversities of earthly existence, death soon emerged as the most persistent and indifferent to human effort. It was, indeed, the major scandal. The hard, irreducible core of human impotence in a world increasingly subject to human will and acumen. The last, yet seemingly irremovable, relic of fate in a world increasingly designed and controlled by reason. (1992, p.134)

In the *Endurance* narratives, the Antarctic landscape simultaneously represents the wild environment that resists man's control, and death itself. Shackleton's victory over this landscape is therefore doubly significant. Bauman argues that part of the challenge of death lies in absence: "Death is an absolute nothing and 'absolute nothing' makes no sense" (1992, p.2). The Antarctic landscape, too, has long been described in terms of absence or lack. Leane argues: "This Antarctica is ground, not figure - it is nothingness and nothingness cannot, by definition, be depicted" (2012, p.1). The wide empty space or nothingness of the Antarctic is represented in the children's texts about the *Endurance*. McCurdy in *Trapped in the Ice* writes "Elephant Island was *nothing* but rock, ice, snow – and wind" (1997, p.24, emphasis added). This description of the Antarctic island echoes B. Webster Smith, who wrote that Elephant island "was *nothing* but an ice-covered mountain where nobody would ever dream of looking for the explorers" (1960, p.59, emphasis added). Describing Shackleton's experiences on the *Discovery* expedition, Webster Smith further notes "one suddenly trod upon *nothing*, fell down what seemed like a bottomless crevasse and was pulled up by a violent jerk as the sledge harness took one's weight" (1960, p.14, emphasis added). These texts reiterate the "nothingness" of the Antarctic which is represented as a landscape of death. The nothingness of death, too, appears through the possibility of being entirely obliterated by the landscape and, like the ship reduced to nothing. In the *Endurance* narratives then, Shackleton seems to overcome both a landscape of death, and death itself. The resurgence of interest in the Shackleton *Endurance* narrative, which began in earnest in the 1960s and

regained momentum in the late 1990s can be seen to be closely connected with an increasing perception of death as "an enemy to be conquered" and as something always theoretically preventable. The contemporary fascination with Shackleton, and with the story of the *Endurance*, can be seen to reflect a continuing culture of "death denial" within British society.

The "Heroic Era" Chronotope in the *Endurance* Narratives

As referenced above, the narrative sequence which shapes the *Terra Nova* narratives reappears here:

> Heroic survival or heroic death → Departure → boat journey → trials/ suffering → heroic survival or heroic death.

Like the stories of the *Terra Nova*, the *Endurance* stories for children foreshadow the conclusion of the narrative through titles or paratextual elements informing the child reader that this is a story of remarkable survival. The narrative then moves temporally backwards to the beginning of the boat journey and proceeds towards the end point presaged at the beginning of the text. This creates the cyclical temporal pattern which is characteristic of the "Heroic Era" chronotope, as the narratives begin and end at the same point. The layering of time which is a key feature of the "Heroic Era" chronotope is evident in these narratives as the shadow of Scott and his disastrous *Terra Nova* expedition appears within the *Endurance* narratives, heightening the anxiety created when the ship is destroyed, and enhancing the sense of success attached to the crew's survival.

Shackleton's survival would seem to disrupt the cyclicality of time that exists within the Scott *Terra Nova* narratives. After the expedition, Shackleton travelled back to Britain, volunteered to join the war effort, and eventually led a third expedition to the Antarctic aboard *Quest* during which he died in 1922. However, much of this biographical detail is

ignored or omitted in the children's retellings of the *Endurance*, which choose to focus on the specific events of the 1914-16 expedition. Grill's *Shackleton's Journey* is one of the few texts examined here that provide extensive information about the planning and development of the expedition. The majority of other texts focus on events from the time the ship becomes trapped in the ice until Shackleton reaches the whaling station at South Georgia, often with a primary focus on the escape period of the narrative. As with the *Terra Nova* narratives additional information about the time preceding or succeeding the events are ignored, enabling the pattern to repeat through consistent retelling.

There is an additional cyclicality to Shackleton's *Endurance* narrative. Shackleton's last stop before he departed for the Antarctic was South Georgia, the sub-Antarctic island that contained a large whaling station. The journey from this point on is circular. This circularity is made overt in many of the illustrations in the children's texts. Butterworth's *Shackleton the Survivor* contains a double-page spread map at the beginning of the text tracing Shackleton's route (Figure 5 below). Similarly, Grill's *Shackleton's Journey* contains an illustration visually depicting the course taken by the explorers from their initial journey through to their arrival back at the whaling station to raise the alarm and seek help (Fig 6 below). These images help the reader to understand references to locations and to track the progress of the explorers through space and time within the texts. However, the images could also be seen to encourage a cyclical understanding of the expedition. Just as Scott's death and burial in the ice, enabled commentators such as Barrie to imagine the adventure merely paused, ready to be resumed at any moment, so too this image of the expedition ending where it began, and ignoring the journeys which complicate the neat circular images (such as Shackleton's repeated attempts to rescue his men from Elephant Island, or the return to Britain), facilitates a cyclical understanding of the expedition. The expedition has been completed, survival ensured, and so the pattern can begin again.

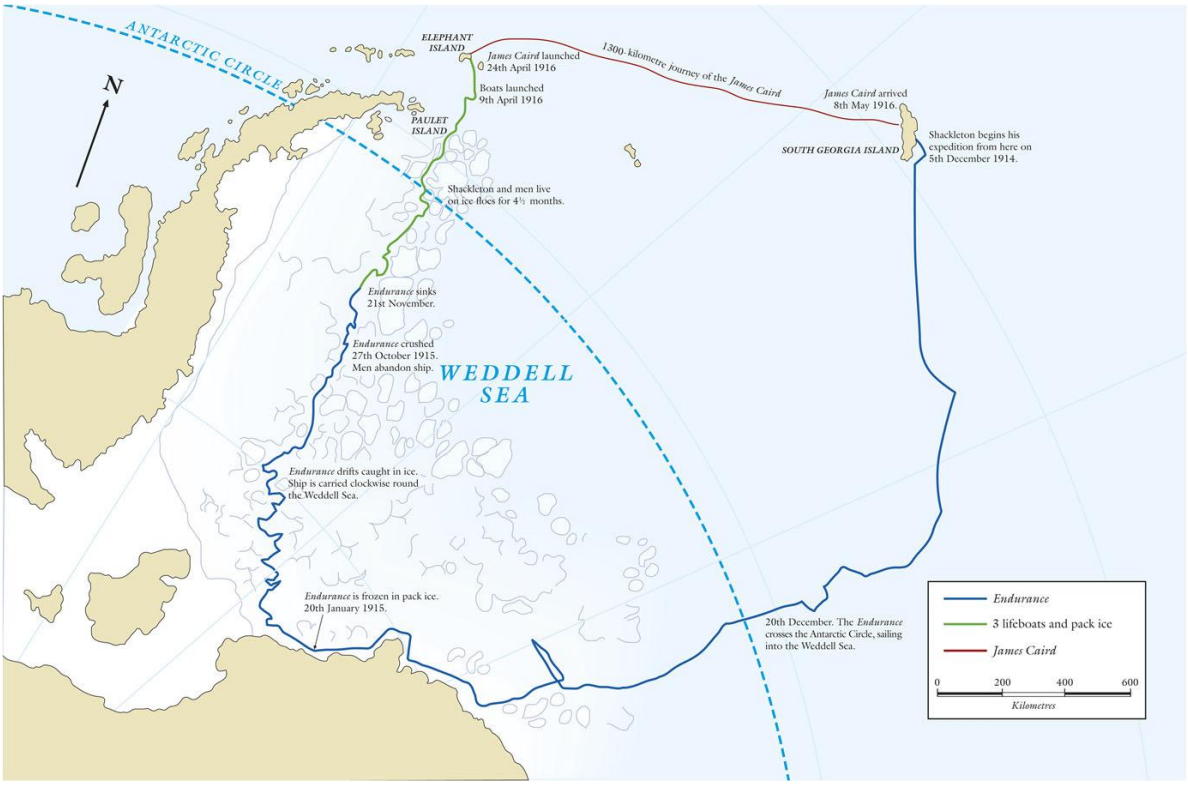


Figure 5: Map image which appears in the endpapers of Christine Butterworth's, *Shackleton the Survivor*, 2001.

Figure 6: Map images of Shackleton's *Endurance* journey from William Grill's, *Shackleton's Journey*, 2014, pp. 17-18

As explored in Chapter Two, within the "Heroic Era" chronotope the figure of the hero arrives fully formed. Shackleton, perhaps even more than Scott, emerges as a 'finished

product', a hero who is tested and found equal to the test within the *Endurance* narratives for children. The myth that has developed around Shackleton, particularly since the resurgence of interest in the story in the late 1990s, focuses on Shackleton's character, on his heroic qualities and leadership ability. The abundance of leadership texts that use Shackleton and the *Endurance* as a case-study, such as Sandra Sucher's 2008 *The Moral Leader: Challenges, Tools and Insights*, reveal the role Shackleton now enjoys as the perfect or ideal leader, from whom we can all learn. In the stories written for a child audience, it is in the Antarctic that Shackleton can achieve his greatest feats of heroism. At the opening of *Shackleton the Survivor*, Butterworth describes the explorer saying: "Shackleton was a great leader who always took care of his men. His men trusted him completely. They called him 'The Boss'" (2001, p.5). Here, Butterworth establishes the complete faith that Shackleton's crew had in their leader, and the narrative that follows demonstrates that that faith was justified. Time in the Antarctic has not altered the explorer's character but further revealed his heroic nature.

Unlike Scott, Shackleton was not able to leave any lasting imprint on the landscape. His ship was crushed and consumed by the ice, and the men constructed only temporary shelters using the remains of the small boats which they used to escape. In the *Terra Nova* narratives, the expedition huts and cairn are used to demonstrate the lasting impact of the explorers' time in the Antarctic on the physical landscape, but there were no such reminders left by Shackleton or his crew. Instead the texts detail the destruction of Shackleton's homeplace, and his inability to complete his original mission. While the Shackleton stories are certainly presented as narratives of success, rather than failure, the destruction of the ship means that while the Antarctic did not fundamentally alter the explorers, they too, were ultimately unable to alter the physical space of Antarctica.

Conclusion

In 1910, the year after Shackleton returned from his *Nimrod* expedition, and just as Scott departed for the *Terra Nova* expedition, Rudyard Kipling published one of his most celebrated poems, "If". The poem was published in his collection *Rewards and Fairies*. Within "If" Kipling creates his own image of heroic masculinity. In the third stanza, Kipling advises courage, endurance, and stoicism in the face of loss:

> If you can make one heap of all your winnings
> And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
> And lose, and start again at your beginnings
> And never breathe a word about your loss;
> If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
> To serve your turn long after they are gone,
> And so hold on when there is nothing in you
> Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'
> (Kipling, 1994, lines 17-24)

Kipling's poem urges readers to take risks and to accept that failure may be a result of those risks. He stresses the importance of physical and emotional endurance in the face of hardships and triumph. Ronald Carter and John McRae argue that "If" represents "the peculiarly British colonial unemotional stiffness" and the "stiff-upper-lip late Victorian ethos" (1997, p.322). Many of the qualities and values endorsed by Kipling are also at the core of the children's retellings of the "Heroic Era" narratives. While at first glance Scott and Shackleton seem to embody two conflicting images of heroism, their stories both speak of the implicit value of adventure, of the glory of Britain, and most importantly of the ability of the male, British body to endure ferocious hardships and to never lose spirit. Authors retelling these stories for over a century focus on the bravery of the men, their stoicism in the face of great suffering

and even death, and the ability of the men to endure hardships and privation. John Beynon argues that the poem is a "celebration of Imperial masculinity and its doctrine of physical and moral courage and self-reliance" (2002, p.49). Beynon notes that the poem is structured as a set of instructions. The ultimate outcome of following these instructions is to become "a man" which Kipling situates in the text as the pinnacle of achievement. However, as Beynon asserts, the masculinity which is depicted in the poem "appears obsessive, emotionally repressed and duty bound to the point of pathology" (2002, p.49-50). The image of masculinity within the *Terra Nova* and *Endurance* narratives is similarly outmoded. It is an image that does not allow for a variety of masculinities but celebrates stereotypical masculinity and heroism centred on the male body. These stories continue to be retold for child audiences and yet the construction of gender in the texts remains largely the same and similarly problematic. If these stories are to be continually reiterated for child readers, the representation of gender within the texts deserves and requires greater consideration. This is particularly true because the texts depict a stereotypical form of masculinity which exists in opposition to the natural environment, and risks fostering ecophobic attitudes amongst child readers.

Having situated the Antarctic firmly as the antagonists, the "Heroic Era" narratives position the continent as a landscape of trial where the physical and psychological strength of the explorers is tested. Mark Gallagher argues "Popular film and literature employ numerous strategies to define particular spaces and environments as settings for action and male agency, to re-establish men's privileged position in active space, and to code a range of activities as inherently masculine" (2006, p.3). In the 'Heroic-Era' texts for children, particularly the *Endurance* narratives, the Antarctic is defined as a space for male achievement. It is here that men, who had languished in mediocrity in the industrialised, modern world, can achieve hero status and gain lasting recognition. Women are on the margins of these texts, if they appear at

all, as unseen wives or mothers who will receive devastating letters from beyond the grave, or patiently await the return of the lauded hero. Femininity exists in these tales in extremes as the providential ship acting in the 'good mother' role or as the she-demon representing the life-negating 'bad mother'. The central focus in this body of literature for children is the heroism of the two key protagonists, and the ability of man to endure suffering and, in various different ways, 'conquer' the wild landscape. John Stephens observes that "masculinity is not simply imposed on boys because of hegemonic masculinity, and hence patriarchal norms, but because of the historically-situated embodied practices (repetitive, lived aspects of sexual identity) of adult males and boys themselves" (2002, p.xii). Although the stories of the *Terra Nova* and *Endurance* have become mythologised, the figures at the heart of the stories are 'real' people, and the stories reflect 'real' expeditions which were populated entirely by men, and so the stories can seem necessarily male in focus. However, it is possible to engage with this fascinating period in Antarctic history without unquestioningly representing established narratives for child readers, and there are authors rewriting these tales rather than simply retelling them. As Chapter Four demonstrates, authors such as Geraldine McCaughrean and Caroline Alexander seek to challenge the representation of the Antarctic as a landscape for exclusively male achievement and to subvert the dominant representations of gender within the genre. These authors interrogate the myths that have built up around Scott and Shackleton and provide alternative ways of understanding the "Heroic Era" narratives.

Chapter Four: Heroic Era Subversions and Revisions

The stories of the "Heroic Era" of Antarctic exploration are part of the cultural inheritance of generations of British children. The majority of children's texts that retell "Heroic Era" stories adhere to conventional patterns and tropes. This chapter will examine two works of prose fiction both of which have been marketed as YA literature: Geraldine McCaughrean's *The White Darkness* (2005) and Caroline Alexander's *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* (1997). These texts offer radical revisions of the established narratives. These texts subvert the two dominant Antarctic narratives explored in Chapters Two and Three: *The White Darkness* is an interrogation of Scott's *Terra Nova* narrative, and *Mrs Chippy* reimagines Shackleton's *Endurance* narrative. These are not the only two texts which offer alternative perspectives on the 'Heroic Era'; Jen Green's *Avoid Joining Shackleton's Polar Expedition* (2002) takes a humorous look at Shackleton's *Endurance* Expedition, while the illustrations, particularly the illustrated maps, in William Grill's *Shackleton's Journey* (2014) offer unusual perspectives on the Antarctic and 'Heroic Era' expeditions, highlighting the mutability of the continent and the role of the wider expeditionary team. However, Green and Grill's texts remain relatively conservative and are therefore discussed in Chapter Three, and in Chapter Six rather than being included within the discussion of radical revisions attempted here. McCaughrean and Alexander's texts have been selected for specific attention because these two texts are notable in their radical and irreverent approach to the 'Heroic Era' narratives. While the texts explored in Chapters Two and Three are not all identical in approach, they all represent the well-established narratives of the expeditions, retelling the same specific incidents and refraining from any serious critique of Scott or Shackleton. In contrast, this chapter investigates how McCaughrean and Alexander subvert the established conventions of the "Heroic Era" narrative for children. I analyse how time is manipulated by these authors as a

means of destabilising the "Heroic Era" chronotope. I examine how McCaughrean and Alexander undermine the figure of the hero, focusing on the key protagonists of the texts, Sym and Mrs Chippy, and how these protagonists challenge conventional ideas of gender, age, and power within "Heroic Era" narratives. Finally, I explore the depiction of Scott, Oates, and Shackleton in the texts, and how McCaughrean and Alexander undermine or question the heroic images of these characters within their narratives.

The White Darkness follows the 14 year-old protagonist Symone, or Sym for short, who is fascinated by the Antarctic landscape and history, principally the tragic story of Robert F. Scott and his 1910-12 attempt to reach the South Pole. Sym is particularly captivated by the figure of Lawrence 'Titus' Oates, a member of Scott's polar party who died in the Antarctic. When we meet Sym she is bereaved, having recently suffered the loss of her father, and she is isolated from her mother and her peers. The dominant figures in her life are her 'uncle' Victor who has fostered her love of the Antarctic, and Titus, with whom Sym has an imaginary relationship. When Victor suddenly surprises Sym with a trip to the Antarctic she is initially overjoyed. Once they arrive on the continent, however, Sym is forced to reassess her past and begins to understand the depths of her 'uncle's' deceptions, and how she has been manipulated and abused. It is a text that interrogates Antarctic myths, as Sym's deranged uncle takes her on a quest to find, and claim, the hidden worlds within the earth's core. *The White Darkness* asks its readers to reconsider the "Heroic Era" narratives and specifically the figures at the centre of these heroic tales.

Alexander's text, in contrast, seems to be a more straightforward rewriting of Shackleton's *Endurance* narrative told, humorously, from the perspective of the ship's cat, Mrs Chippy. Mrs Chippy came aboard the *Endurance* with the ship's carpenter, Harry

'Chippy' McNish,[10] and, despite being a male cat, he was named 'Mrs Chippy' due to his role as McNish's companion. Mrs Chippy was a popular member of the crew and appears in many of the crew's diaries. When the *Endurance* sank, Shackleton decided that any unnecessary items and animals had to be discarded, and so Mrs Chippy, along with the expedition's dogs, was shot. This chapter explores the radical results of Alexander's choice of protagonist, and how this choice affects the framing of the narrative and the representation of figures such as Shackleton and the carpenter McNish in the text.

Subverting Antarctic Chronotopes

Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope, I have argued that time is a key element in Antarctic literature for children, and have described the cyclical "Heroic Era" chronotope that shapes "Heroic Era" narratives for child readers. In this chronotope, time becomes layered, removing the temporal distance between the events of the early twentieth century expeditions and the periods which follow. Time can be seen to exist on a vertical axis as the temporal distance between the "Heroic Era" and subsequent periods collapses, creating a landscape in which the events of the past have a palpable impact on the present. I have further argued that the events of the "Heroic Era" can be seen to impact many other genres of Antarctic children's literature, such as whaling and adventure literature, as the actions of the early Antarctic explorers repeat or reverberate in subsequent periods within Antarctic history. Both McCaughrean and Alexander knowingly play with temporal constructs in their narratives to shape and change the way that time operates in their literary representations of the Antarctic.

[10] There seems to be some debate as to the correct spelling of the carpenter's name. Alexander spells the name McNish, while many other authors (Alfred Lansing and Paul Dowswell included) spell the name McNeish. Even the carpenters' shipmates do not seem to agree as Shackleton and Frank Worlsey spell the name McNeish, while photographer Frank Hurley spells it without the 'e'. I have used Alexander's spelling throughout as this is the central text under consideration here, the only exception being direct quotes which retain the spelling of the original.

Time in The White Darkness

The functioning of time and the enduring presence of the past in the Antarctic is a central focus of McCaughrean's *The White Darkness*. McCaughrean acknowledges and explores the dominance of the "Heroic Era" within modern cultural perceptions of the Antarctic, primarily through Sym's imaginary friend and love interest Titus Oates. At the opening of the text Sym declares, "I've been in love with Titus Oates for quite a while now – which is ridiculous, since he's been dead for ninety years. But look at it this way. In ninety years I'll be dead, too, and then the age difference won't matter" (2005, p.1). In the first lines of the text McCaughrean establishes time as a central theme and posits death as a means of eliding temporal difference. The death of Sym's father and feelings of alienation from her school friends have encouraged Sym to abandon her own environment and peers in order to fully immerse herself in the "Heroic Era" world of the Antarctic. When Sym first learns that she will be going to the Antarctic she thinks: "Oh, Titus! Titus! We're going to Antarctica! Think of it, Titus!" (p. 24). Here, the name of the continent is enclosed in between repeated references to the "Heroic Era" explorer, subtly indicating that, for Sym, the continent is still largely defined by Titus and his companions. For Sym, as within the "Heroic Era" chronotope, Oates is not a part of history, or a character relegated to books. Instead he is an acting subject who significantly influences the events depicted in the novel. The character of Oates and his relationship with Sym in *The White Darkness* is representative of the enduring influence of the "Heroic Era" on modern cultural conceptions of the Antarctic and the apparent inability or unwillingness within British culture to move beyond this period of Antarctic history.

Through the figure of Titus Oates, and Sym's obsession with the "Heroic Era" expeditions, McCaughrean emphasises how the "Heroic Era" is made to exist simultaneously with the present. She then endeavours to insert a temporal distance between the "Heroic Era"

and the contemporary world of her protagonist. As the narrative progresses, McCaughrean highlights the temporal distance separating Sym and Oates. Changes in the way that people are able to engage with, and travel to, the Antarctic are underlined through Sym's methods of transport on her way to Antarctica. Sym takes the Eurostar to France and then takes a series of flights until she finally arrives, with little difficulty, in the Antarctic. As Sym and Victor travel with speed across the world it is as though Sym's Edwardian companion struggles to keep pace. On the plane to Argentina, Sym pleads with Titus: "Keep up, Titus. Planes go so much faster than trains" (p.33). The different modes of travel that carried Titus through space and time – trains and prolonged boat journeys – are forced into their historical context and appear archaic. Already McCaughrean is inserting a temporal distance between Sym and the explorers whom she most admires through highlighting the technological advances which have occurred since the "Heroic Era" that have revolutionised human engagement with the continent. Perhaps even more important are Sym's companions on her journey south. She arrives on the ice not as part of a grand expedition but with a group of privileged and relatively elderly travellers, whom Sym describes as being plagued by "arthritis and gout" (p. 37). These are modern Antarctic tourists. This type of touristic engagement with the Antarctic is completely at odds with "Heroic Era" depictions of the Antarctic. The environmental conditions, and the dangers posed to visitors to the Antarctic, were part of what made the early Antarctic expeditions of Scott and Shackleton noteworthy. The explorers' ability to travel to and traverse this challenging landscape is represented as an important part of their 'heroic' achievements, as I have discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Through the depiction of Sym's modern, straightforward journey to the Antarctic, McCaughrean demonstrates that the main obstacles to visiting the continent are now financial, and endurance is no longer a standard requirement for visitors to the landscape.

As well as forcing a temporal wedge between the "Heroic Era" and the present of her protagonist, McCaughrean also works to position the "Heroic Era" within the broader history of human engagement with the continent (both literary and exploratory), and therefore to root it within a specific, and distant, historical period. Victor is a proponent of polar portal theories. The idea of portals or openings at the South Pole is, as Elizabeth Leane notes, "of ancient origin" (2012, p.35). Leane argues that theories of openings at the south and north poles can be traced back to the Ancient Greeks who believed that "the terrestrial poles were correspondingly the places where the celestial axis met the planet's surface – interfaces between earth and the heavens" (2012, p.38). One prominent proponent of the idea of polar portals was the American John Cleves Symmes, who developed a theory that the world was hollow with the poles providing access to concentric spheres within.[11] In 1818 he began to promote these theories publicly, self-publishing pamphlets and conducting lectures around America. His ideas gained traction and Symmes later lobbied the US congress to fund an expedition to Antarctica in order to test his theories. Despite gaining some supporters, Symmes' ideas became generally discredited and "Symmes's Hole" became "a code word for scorn" (Rothenberg, 2001, p.266) in American popular culture. However, Symmes's ideas, along with other theories of the South Pole, had a significant effect on the literature that was written about Antarctica.

Many characters in Antarctic literature are pulled inexplicably towards the South Pole. In Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", "the classic of polar imagery" (Simpson-Housely, 2002, p.111), a storm pulls the sailors towards Antarctica. Similarly, in James De Mille's 1888 novel *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, a sudden storm leaves the two central characters stranded on the Antarctic ice watching helplessly as their ship is pulled further and further from their view. At the end Edgar Allen Poe's novel, *The Narrative*

[11] For a fuller history of Symmes' theories and their critical reception see Marc Rothenberg's 2001text *History of Science in the United States*, (New York: Taylor and Francis).

of Gordon Arthur Pym of Nantucket (1838), the protagonist Pym and his companion Dirk Peters find themselves alone in a small boat being driven towards the South Pole by a strong current. As they get nearer to the Pole, they see that they are approaching "a limitless cataract, rolling silently into the sea from some immense and far-distant rampart along the whole extent of the southern horizon" (Poe, 1866, p.185). The narrative ends ambiguously, the two men are drawn towards the void by the unseen forces and their last sight is "a shrouded human figure, very far larger in proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow" (Poe, 1866, p.185). Poe's novel, "the most influential of all hollow-earth narratives" (Manhire, 2004, p.13), intentionally references Symmes' theories and Poe is even thought to have been associated with followers of Symmes (Manhire, 2004, p.13).

McCaughrean draws on polar portal theories in *The White Darkness,* specifically the work of Symmes. The protagonist, Sym, is named after Symmes, an act which reflects her father and Victor's obsession with the continent, and their willingness to forcibly involve Sym in their Antarctic schemes. The ancient origins of Antarctic myths are highlighted early in the novel. When Sym goes out to dinner, she notices:

> There was a Greek mythical fresco on the restaurant wall […] I worked out it must be Phaeton, careering around the sky in his father's sun chariot, charring the green places to deserts, dooming both Poles to everlasting cold because he couldn't control the horses. (p.16)

Through the references to speculative theories about the South Pole, McCaughrean is introducing her readers to a period of Antarctic history that predates the expeditions of Scott and Shackleton. In doing so, she positions the "Heroic Era" within the wider literary and cultural history of the landscape, and forces the vertical axis of the "Heroic Era" chronotope to take a horizontal form. This is manifested in the text as the "simultaneity" (Bakhtin, 1981,

p.157) of events which characterises the "Heroic Era" chronotope is undermined, and the reader is encouraged to understand the vast temporal distance that separates the "Heroic Era" from early engagement with the Antarctic, and, similarly, the temporal distance between the "Heroic Era" and the modern day.

McCaughrean further subverts the "Heroic Era" chronotope through vividly depicting the workings of time on the heroic body. At the beginning of the text, the character of Oates appears young, attractive, and physically unaffected by his death. However, once Sym arrives in Antarctica, this construct starts to disintegrate. The impact of time, and the Antarctic environment, becomes visible upon the body of the imagined Oates. His face becomes "ice-pocked" and "the blue lips split and bleeding, the cornea of his eyes scraped red by the iron-filing flecks in the wind" (p.231-232). Oates's deteriorating condition forces Sym to confront the brutal reality of his death, compelling her to understand how his body was broken in his last days and hours. Finally she concedes:

> All right! You died! Lawrence Oates died! He crawled on and on until the pain paralysed him – until the walls of his lungs froze and he couldn't breathe, and the vitreous in his eyeballs froze and blinded him, and his arms wouldn't lift his face off the ground any more and his damaged thighbone snapped. Then he froze to death and the snow buried him! (p.210)

In these passages, McCaughrean undermines the idea of the Antarctic as a space that preserves, and looks instead at the destructive potential of the landscape. Sym, too, is made to feel viscerally the force of the time-space of the Antarctic. Her body is constantly attacked by the landscape. McCaughrean offers graphic descriptions of the searing pain and incapacity caused by specifically polar problems such as ice-blindness:

> The ultra-violet light reflects off the snow and burns the cornea. At first it feels like when you peel onions, then like when you open the oven door and

> something's burning and the smoke is acrid in your face. Then it gets really bad. Now there's the added joy of ice crystals. They form a haze in the air – like tiny fragments of razor blade that slice into the eye. (p.203)

Through Sym's suffering, and the descriptions of Oates's decline, the reader is offered a glimpse into the true experience of Scott and his companions when the veneer of heroic endurance is removed. McCaughrean deftly shows that in order to retain the image of the men as perfect heroes, who could potentially emerge unscathed from the ice, we must ignore the frostbite, the gangrene, and the emaciated bodies of the explorers in favour of an idealised heroic image of fit men bravely facing death. In this way, McCaughrean encourages her reader to reconsider both the impact of Antarctic time upon the heroic body and the sanitised image of death presented in the "Heroic Era" narratives.

As Sym struggles to survive, lost and alone in the Antarctic, she considers the possibility of death in the landscape and takes comfort from the fact that she would be with Oates, telling him "Your body is here somewhere. It's a good place to be" (p.234). Oates interjects, telling her that the explorers' bodies have been ejected into the icy seas:

> THE ICE SHELF IS MOVING, YOU FOOL!" shouts Titus. "The surface is moving! All the time! New stuff welling up in the centre, pushing the old ice outwards! […] Lawrence Oates hasn't been in the Antarctic for years, Sym! Twenty years ago his body dropped out of the bottom of the ice-shelf and into the sea! OATES IS GONE! His body was food for the leopard seals and the crabs! (p.235)

There will be no re-birth or re-emergence. The explorers' bodies are not preserved forever young; instead they suffered the indignity of being consumed by animals. This assertion is perhaps McCaughrean's most powerful rejection of the continuing dominance of the "Heroic Era" in Antarctic literature. The revelation subverts the literal insistence within many *Terra*

Nova narratives that the bodies remain buried in the ice. It also loosens the hold that the "Heroic Era" narratives retain in the landscape. In other "Heroic Era" narratives for children, the bodies of the explorers and the cairn built over the bodies are posited as a visible reminder of the lasting place they hold within the Antarctic. In 1959, Philip Briggs wrote:

> The men built a tremendous cairn above the three bodies in the tent, *and there they still lie*, Captain Scott, Dr Wilson and Lieutenant Bowers at the gateway of the country they conquered, on the threshold of those lonely lands. Near that point, on Observation Hill, a giant cross was later set up to their memory. Under the inscription are the words: 'To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.' (p.96, emphasis added)

The presence of the bodies in the landscape, and the preserving power of the ice, creates a picture of the explorers simply frozen, awaiting rebirth. The character of Titus at the beginning of McCaughrean's text is representative of this idea of perpetual rebirth of the "Heroic Era" explorers. At the beginning of the text he exhibits none of the signs of the suffering which caused his death. Instead, death is represented as eternal youth. However, at the end of the novel, McCaughrean offers a starkly different portrait. In her text we see the Antarctic not as preserver but as destroyer. She directly challenges the idea of the explorers returning from the dead and instead offers a more realistic and graphic account of their suffering and death, and the eventual discarding of their remains into the Antarctic seas.

McCaughrean also challenges the basis of the explorers' heroic reputations. In Chapter Two, I outlined how the idea of a 'good death' has been central to Scott and his companions' heroic reputations. McCaughrean attacks the idea of a good death, presenting something much more realistic and gruesome, and describing the pain and indignity that the explorers suffered in their last days and hours. McCaughrean is essentially attacking the heroic reputations of Scott and his crew, and the hero cult that has developed around them within

British culture. She can also be seen to be undermining the claims of ownership and superiority that the majority of *Terra Nova* narratives make on behalf of Scott and his crew, through depicting the landscape as a form of creature which has consumed and excreted the explorers' remains, indifferent to their apparent heroic status.

Time in Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition

Alexander's text similarly disrupts and subverts the established "Heroic Era" chronotope. The fact that Mrs Chippy died shortly after the *Endurance* was crushed in the ice means that the focus of the narrative is necessarily shifted from the active section of the tale, after the sinking of the ship, to the siege period. This disrupts the narrative pattern which structures other texts about Shackleton's *Endurance* voyage. As discussed in Chapter Three, the siege phase of the narrative is a period of relative calm and domesticity that is often omitted or glossed over in other *Endurance* narratives for children, which generally focus on the action and adventure of the escape period. Both Michael Brown in *Shackleton's Epic Voyage* (1969) and Janice Marriott in *Endurance Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition* (2000) entirely omit the siege section of the narrative, choosing to begin their stories with the sinking of the ship. A short survey of the other *Endurance* narratives examined in Chapter Three shows that they spend on average only a quarter of the book focusing on the period before the sinking of the ship.[12] However, *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* concentrates on the siege period and culminates in the sinking of the ship. The rest of the action is only addressed in a final note to the text: "Note 115: This is the last entry in Mrs Chippy's journal. As is well known, on 30 August 1916, after many months of hardship, Shackleton secured the rescue of all his men"

[12] B Webster Smith in *Sir Ernest Shackleton* (1960) spends just 9 pages of 62 on the siege section of the narrative; Michael McCurdy in *Trapped in the Ice* (1997) spends 9 of 33 pages; Meredith Hooper in *Ice Trap!* (2000) spends 5 of 22 pages; Christine Butterworth in *Shackleton the Survivor* (2001) spends 9 of 31 pages; Paul Dowswell in *True Polar Adventures* (2002) spends 4 of 19 pages; Gavin Mortimer in *The Voyage of Shackleton's Endurance* (2008) spends a surprisingly generous 10 of 28 pages. An average of these figures results in the percentage of 24.6% per text spent on the siege section of the narrative. If you add in the two texts mentioned above which omit this section completely that figure drops to 18.5%.

(Alexander, 1997: 170).[13] Alexander describes the escape section of the narrative as "well known", underlining the fact that the escape section of the narrative dominates the cultural perception of the *Endurance* expedition. In contrast, Alexander's story is about individuals, (such as Mrs Chippy and McNish), and time periods that are neglected in conventional retellings of the *Endurance* narrative.

The shift in temporal focus changes this story entirely. We see the explorers not in action, making daring escapes or completing seemingly impossible boat journeys but in a period of enforced stasis, at the mercy of their environment. This disrupts the established narrative sequence of a traditional "Heroic Era" text through refusing to allow the story to reach its much-anticipated ending. Alexander unsettles the established "Heroic Era" chronotope both for protagonists within the text who are abandoned just as the action reaches its climax, and for readers who are denied the comfort of the familiar ending. In essence, the story of Shackleton's *Endurance* has become a story of success through survival but here it become a story of patience and disaster with only a brief hint at the eventual successful conclusion.

This change in focus also results in a markedly different narrative pace in this text in comparison to other *Endurance* narratives for children. The crew languidly pass their days waiting for a chance to escape from the ice. The story is transformed from an exciting adventure narrative filled with fast-paced movement through both time and space, to a story of a prolonged siege without the reward of the dramatic conclusion. In *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition*, the explorers appear in largely domestic roles, cooking, cleaning, and managing the ship's stores. Familiar events are reframed within this domestic context. Alexander describes the commonly depicted celebrations which Shackleton organised to mark the last

[13] *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* is heavily footnoted throughout. These footnotes are purported to be written by an editor who is assembling the diary entries for publication. The notes are a stylistic element of the text and are part of how Alexander subverts the conventions of the "Heroic Era" genre through echoing and exaggerating the conventional aspects of the genre for humorous effect.

day of sunlight in the Antarctic as winter set in. It is only obliquely referenced and framed in connection with food:

> Slept through dinner last night, and had to get my bowl specially prepared by Blackborrow. Was woken by the sound of my shipmates singing and laughing and having a little concert, which is all very well and cheery, if not entirely considerate of those other members of the Expedition who require a little more sleep than others on account of their extra duties. Joined my shipmates briefly, sharing in their merriment and sardines. The Boss called for quiet, saying he'd like to propose a toast. 'To the Sun,' he said, lifting his mug. (p.76)

Later Alexander describes an incident where movements of the pack ice forced the ship into a near horizontal position and threatened to sink the ship entirely, before subsequent movement pushed the ship upwards and temporarily out of danger. Again, the incident is reframed to highlight food and domesticity:

> Having completed the first part of my tea, I joined my shipmates in the wardroom for a little something extra, i.e. sardines on toast. I had just settled myself on a book Wordie was reading, when suddenly, without any notice, we were all turned on our sides! All the tea things went sliding off the table, all the chairs overturned, all my shipmates and I tumbled together. (p.139)

While starvation and 'going without' is a frequent theme of "Heroic Era" narratives, here the narrative is built around food, and time within the text is marked by the schedule of meals and sleep: "February 22nd. Seal for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Milk and butter from plates for tea, during which time the Boss called for attention and made an announcement. 'Well men,' he said, 'it seems we'll be wintering here'" (p.39). Once again, dramatic or familiar events within the *Endurance* narrative are almost side-notes in a diary which is focused on everyday routine and domestic tasks. As the traditional markers of time are lost, such as

sunrise and sunset, meal times become the primary markers of time and reinforce the domestic interest of the text. The domestic focus, and the emphasis on routine, can be seen to echo the chronotope described by Maria Nikolajeva as the "female narrative chronotope" (1996, p.126) in literature for children. As explored in Chapter One, Nikolajeva uses the idea of the chronotope to examine the gender divides in the depiction of time in texts for girls and boys. She argues that male time in books for boys is typically linear, goal-oriented, and open, as the protagonists move through space and time to achieve their goals. In contrast, she argues that within books for girls, time is cyclical featuring 'recurrent time indications', focusing on the pattern of the seasons, and the space through which the protagonists move is limited, generally domestic or interior (Nikolajeva, 1996: 121-126). Time in *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* is structured along the lines of the female narrative chronotope and meal-times and bed-times are the recurrent time indicators. Within the "Heroic Era" chronotope, there is a definite linearity to the internal chronotope, as the explorers constantly take action and move towards either death or survival. In *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition*, this sense of internal momentum is removed through the focus on the siege period of the narrative, and the sense of repetition and stagnation is created using recurrent time indicators.

Spatially, the novel can also be seen to adhere to the female narrative chronotope. *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* is a largely interior narrative. Action takes place within the ship and it is not until the very end of the text, when the men are all ordered off the boat that the chronotope widens. For the majority of the text we are taken on a meandering tour of the small, interior spaces of the ship. The reader is offered glimpses into cabins, the dining room ironically renamed "the Ritz", and storage areas, as Mrs Chippy describes how he, "Accompanied Bakewell under his arm to the main hatch, then went below for tea"; "left to help Blackborrow in the galley"; "Observed Wild enter Sir Ernest's cabin today after lunch and decided to clean my paws and whiskers in the passage outside" (p.13, p.28, p.56); or

chased mice around the nooks and crannies of the ship. While Mrs Chippy can observe the wider landscape from the ship's deck, the space through which he can move is strictly defined and interior. Nikolajeva argues that in "the male chronotope" space is "open" and stories unfold "far away from home in the wide world" (1996, p.125). In *Mrs Chippy*, just as the action moves into more traditionally male space, a space which is open and 'in the wide world', Alexander concludes her narrative. The narrative sequence that conventionally structures retellings of the *Endurance* is abruptly disrupted, and the heroic figures are abandoned before any display of heroism can be completed. In this way, *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* subversively reframes the protagonists of the *Endurance* within the context of the female chronotope. Alexander forces a complete shift in focus within her retelling of the *Endurance* narrative and in doing so changes the complexion of the narrative entirely. It alters from a story of action and survival to a tale of inaction and ultimately death, as the action concludes just before Mrs Chippy is shot on Shackleton's orders.

Subverting the Hero

Perhaps the most subversive elements of both *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* and *The White Darkness* is the way that they reinterpret the figure of the Antarctic hero. They do this through a reconsideration of those figures who generally occupy the centre of the frame in "Heroic Era" narratives – Scott and Shackleton. Both texts also subvert the figure of the hero through their choice of protagonist.

Sym

In McCaughrean's *The White Darkness*, Sym is markedly different from traditional Antarctic heroes or protagonists, particularly those of the "Heroic Era". There are three key attributes which set Sym apart from traditional Antarctic heroes: she is female, she is a child, and she

has a disability. Margery Hourihan describes the conventional hero as male, "white, European" and "strong, brave, skilful, rational and dedicated" (1997, p.1). Superficially, Sym seems to possess few of these qualities. Most obviously, she is not male. In the previous three chapters the stark gender imbalance in writing about the Antarctic for children has been a repeating theme; the simple fact of Sym taking her place among the ranks of Antarctic heroes is revolutionary. In addition, Sym undermines the presumption of a male readership of Antarctic texts as we see her surrounded and absorbed by the stories of Scott, Oates, and Shackleton. As a child, Sym is presumed to be lacking many of the essential qualities of the hero as outlined by Hourihan. Throughout the text Sym is continually undermined and devalued based on her status as a child; Victor consistently lies to Sym, and presumes that she will continue to blindly follow his orders simply because of her status as a female child. Victor also experimented on Sym when she was a young child, causing serious hearing damage and making her reliant on a hearing aid. Sym's disability is a physical representation of the abuse she has suffered at the hands of her uncle, and it is also used in the text to symbolise her difficulty in understanding and engaging with the wider world. Sym's disability is another element which sets her apart from the conventional hero, who is celebrated for his physical strength and prowess.

In her representation of a female Antarctic hero, McCaughrean attempts to disrupt the connection made in "Heroic Era" narratives between masculinity, science, and rationality. Julie Nelson notes that reason and emotion have been seen as opposing forces in Western thought, arguing that "reason" has "of course, [been] associated with masculinity and emotion with femininity" (2002, p.17). "Heroic Era" texts can be seen to perpetuate this view of masculinity in association with reason through their portrayal of 'heroic' men who are attempting to expand scientific and geographic understanding through their expeditions. In these texts women appear (if they appear at all) as invisible wives and mothers left behind,

whose potential grief is part of the emotional weight of the text as the explorers struggle to survive. McCaughrean has stated that in *The White Darkness* she wanted "female intelligence and rationality to come out of it looking cool, too. Sym saves her own skin thanks to her own knowledge and strategies" (McCaughrean, pers. comm., January 16, 2016). Victor represents the views McCaughrean is working to subvert. Having stolen Sym's mother's passport to ensure that she cannot accompany them on the trip, he proceeds to mock the victim of his theft. Turning to Sym, Victor says: "'The Ladies eh? God bless 'em.' It was said with a conspiratorial wink – which must mean I'm not really female but an honorary man. A good thing, I think. A compliment" (p.11). Victor's comment connects women and womanhood with poor planning and lower intellectual capacities. As an avid reader of Antarctic "Heroic Era" fiction, with its constant desire to celebrate traditional masculinity, Sym has absorbed the gender-biased values of these tales and therefore takes Victor's insult as a compliment. Even though Sym has internalised the negative images of femininity perpetuated by "Heroic Era" narratives and espoused by Victor, she in fact subverts these images. Throughout the text, Sym shows herself to be a logical thinker, calm under great pressure, and significantly more methodical than her male counterparts. After their Antarctic vehicle breaks down and Victor's plan begins to unravel, Sym finds herself alone in the middle of the Antarctic ice with Victor and his conspirators: the conman Manfred, and his pseudo-son Sigurd. In their panic, the men abandon logic endangering the entire group. In this moment Sym is the voice of reason:

> 'We couldn't let off a flare anyway,' I said. 'The air's full of diesel. The whole van would go up. […] Sigurd, you've got diesel all over your clothes: you'd go up like a torch!' But despite me saying it – and perfectly loud – Manfred the Viking reached into his breast pocket and took out a big gold lighter, thumb resting over the flintwheel. (p.116)

The image of Manfred and the gold lighter here is reminiscent of Shackleton, and the gold lighter he abandoned in the snow, frequently reported in the *Endurance* narratives; but where Shackleton led his team to safety, Manfred risks annihilating himself and others through his stupidity. Sym's intervention prevents Manfred from striking the lighter and saves her life and the lives of the men. This same use of reason and calm judgment is evident when their Antarctic vehicle hangs precariously over a crevasse. As Victor orders them out of the Hagglund, Sym responds, "'No', I said, tugging the headphones wide from his head, shouting into the microphone. 'Don't get out. The footprint of the vehicle's lighter than a man's'" (p.143). Victor presumes that he is intellectually superior to Sym, but this is one of several incidents in which Victor endangers himself and his team. Victor is obsessed with fantasies of the Antarctic landscape, and this obsession propels him, and others around him, towards inevitable annihilation within the space.

Despite Victor's "conspiratorial wink" to Sym, indicating that she is "an honorary man", we later learn that Victor's view of Sym is entirely focused on her gender and exploiting and abusing her female body. Victor explains Sigurd's role, saying: "'Made it a part of the deal, I did, that Bruch brought his boy along. '*A mate for my girl*'" (p.176, emphasis added). He envisions Sym and Sigurd as the Adam and Eve of his new interior world. At the climax of the novel Victor attempts to physically force Sym into an ice-chimney, clearly demonstrating his desire to control her body. Asserting his greater physical size and strength, he "lifts [her] bodily towards the opening" and for a moment she is helpless and "can't lift a hand to help [herself]" (p.221). Despite huge physical pain and an inequality in strength and size, Sym refuses to submit. This final assault is the culmination of years of abuse which Sym has finally begun to understand as she accompanies Victor on his bizarre voyage in the Antarctic. Armed with this knowledge and an enduring desire to survive, she decides to fight: "I kick him in the head and spread-eagle myself across the opening, so that

he cannot force me down it" (p.221). Victor has been prepared for betrayal from others (primarily men) and has pre-empted their actions, poisoning the tour guides and travellers and even killing Manfred. However, because of his patronising view of her abilities based on her gender, age, and disability, he has constantly underestimated Sym and is not prepared for this revolt. He can react only with an "open-mouthed smile […] of total bewilderment!" (p.221). Even at this point he is unable to see this as an act of treachery and reads it instead as female stupidity declaring "'Don't you understand, lassie?'" (p.221). Unable to credit Sym with the capacity to rebel, and frustrated by her apparent inability to comprehend, Victor abandons attempts to explain and instead feeds himself into the ice-chimney, towards sudden death, despite Sym's attempts to make him see logic. It is only in his very last moments that he finally understands his own folly, and Sym's prudence: "I see the look that crosses it. Realization. True enlightenment. Dark takes him in the blink of an eye" (p.223). Victor cast Sym in the role of unwitting victim but she defies these expectations to usurp the role of Antarctic hero. The fact that Sym is a girl, and has a disability, both of which set her in opposition to the stereotypical hero figure, renders her act of usurping the hero role significant and subversive.

If Sym's position as a female, and her disability, set her apart from the traditional Antarctic hero, her status as a child is equally 'othering' within the Antarctic context. In "Heroic Era" tales for children the Antarctic is positioned as a space where adults have absolute and uncontested authority and ownership. Using the framework of queer theory and specifically the idea of heteronormativity, Maria Nikolajeva argues that childhood has been "othered" while adulthood is presented as the norm. She offers the term "aetonormativity" as a way to express the "adult normativity" (Nikolajeva, 2010: 8) that governs adult-child relationships and their representation in children's literature. Developing this concept, I wish to focus on the impact of space in relation to aetonormative power relations. Peter Hunt

writes that "the tropes of space and place provide a way of teasing out some of the implications of [the] power imbalance" between the child and adult, specifically in relation to child reader and adult writer (2015, p.24). Hunt further argues that there is "a continuum in classic children's books in the ways in which they are balanced, tipping towards the child or the adult" (2015, p.24). Hunt points to Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* as a text that tries to address the imbalance between adult and child, providing spaces where the children have agency and power over the landscape, and argues that Arthur Ransome achieves "something approaching a perfect balance in his *Swallows and Amazons*" (2015, p.24). I suggest that aetonormativity exists in degrees; this is why Hunt is able to speak of a continuum of power within classic children's texts. As Hunt implies, space is an important factor which impacts the degrees of aetonormative power within a text and there are specific spaces wherein aetonormative power relations become more pronounced. The Antarctic is one such space; it is a landscape which has never supported an indigenous human population and the children which come with such a population. While some Antarctic stations, for example the Argentinian and Chilean bases, allow personnel to bring their children to the continent, children are expressly forbidden from the majority of Antarctic research stations and very few of the human modifications of this space have sought to accommodate for child inhabitants. Moreover, the dominant genre of literature about this landscape for children ("Heroic Era" fiction), excludes children from this landscape altogether. McCaughrean inserts a female child hero who outwits and undermines the adults who have abused their power into the adult space of the Antarctic.

Expanding upon Nikolajeva's ideas of aetonormativity, Cleméntine Beauvais argues that it is necessary to interrogate the forms of power which are at work within aetonormative power structures. She uses the terms "authority" and "might" to differentiate between the

power which is largely held by adults, "authority", and the power which children possess, "might". Beauvais writes:

> Authority distinguishes itself from power in that it is not an indication of the possibility for someone to act. Rather, authority encapsulates a set of sometimes numinous properties of a person or institution which enables it to counsel, influence, or order, from a position which all parties accept as being in some way legitimate. (2013, p.79)

In contrast, might is a form of power based largely in potential: "Children are mighty because their specific form of 'power' is dependent on the existence of a future for them in which to act" (2013, p.82). Beauvais sees these forces as "diametrically opposed" and temporally based because, "To be mighty is to have more time left; to be authoritative is to have more time past" (2013, p.82). In *The White Darkness* we can see both forms of power about which Beauvais writes. Victor has authority, as an adult, and as a pseudo-parental figure to Sym; however, he exerts this authority to exclusively selfish ends and to the detriment of Sym. Victor not only tries to exert his authority over Sym, he also tries to undermine her might throughout the text. Might as a form of power is located primarily in potential and rooted in the future, Victor undermines Sym's might through rooting her in the past. Since she was a small child, he has given her books, videos, and diaries to foster her obsession with the Antarctic past. At the same time, he has actively sought to destroy her present and her future: from negligent medical experiments that risk her life and destroy her hearing, to killing her father and bankrupting her family. He ensures that the reality of her present situation is so dire that she seeks solace in the Antarctic past. Eventually, as his hold on her decreases, he attempts to entirely remove Sym's might through eradicating her future altogether as he attempts to throw her down an ice-chimney. However, armed with the knowledge of Victor's deception and abuse, Sym violently defends herself and her future and seizes back her might.

In these final moments of Victor's life, Sym not only reclaims her might but also gains a level of authority and agency as she, for the first time, takes ownership of decisions regarding her body and her future, which Victor in an abuse of his 'authority' has previously dictated. Although this act of revolt is based around a physical defence of self, it is not physicality which saves Sym but intellect. She defies all age and gender-based expectations, and the conventions of the "Heroic Era" genre by surviving. Sym deploys numerous strategies in her attempts to ensure her own survival and several of these strategies (hiding a letter with another passenger detailing Victor's plan, and setting fire to the Hagglund) pay off, resulting in her survival against all odds. Sym does what Scott and Oates could not do, she lives and, in living, she reclaims a measure of power which she had previously been denied.

Mrs Chippy

At first glance, the choice of protagonist in *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* does not seem to have the subversive potential of McCaughrean's Sym. After all, Mrs Chippy was there, is male (despite his female title), and exudes many of the qualities of the traditional explorer: a belief in order, duty, hierarchy, and a passion for exploration. Yet, it is exactly through retaining all of the characteristics of the conventional Antarctic hero and connecting these characteristics with a feline protagonist that the text achieves both humour and subversion. Leane argues that the choice of Mrs Chippy as the protagonist for this text allows Alexander "to parody the whole genre of the Heroic Era journal, complete with explanatory footnotes by a far from impartial editor, and the inevitable introduction by an esteemed personage, 'Lord Mouser-Hunt'" (2012, p.108). Leane provides only a brief overview of *Mrs Chippy*, however this text deserves greater critical attention, as it knowingly plays with the conventions of the "Heroic Era" genre to create a unique text which simultaneously retells and subverts one of the most famous "Heroic Era" narratives. The title is the first and perhaps most obvious

parody in the text. *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* purposefully references the title under which Scott's *Terra Nova* diaries were published, *Scott's Last Expedition*. In doing so, the story sets Mrs Chippy on a par with arguably the most prominent Antarctic explorer, and implies that the (unspoken) death of Mrs Chippy at the conclusion of the narrative can be understood within the history of heroic Antarctic sacrifices. When Scott died, the world mourned his loss, his companions created the cairn over the bodies as a lasting monument to their lost leader, and the research station at the South Pole was eventually named the Amundsen-Scott base partly in his honour. Mrs Chippy was shot and discarded along with other animals for which Shackleton no longer had any use. That these two deaths, which were so utterly different, are memorialised in the same way undermines the hagiographic nature of conventional "Heroic Era" narratives. The introduction to the book, purportedly written by "Lord Mouser-Hunt", a reference to Lord Hunt who wrote the introduction for Shackleton's *South*, further develops the generic parody:

> The stirring story of this remarkable polar hero is well known. Recruited to accompany Sir Ernest Shackleton on his 1914 Expedition to Antarctica, Mrs Chippy endured almost a year of unimaginable privation and hardship when the Expedition was shipwrecked in the icy wastes of the Weddell Sea. The story of how this remarkable explorer endured the iron paw of Nature is one of the very greatest records of any age. (p.ix)

In the introduction and throughout the text, the melodramatic language that abounds in "Heroic Era" narratives for children is used for humorous effect. There is a deeply subversive nature to the humour employed here, as those figures who are treated with reverence, and whose narratives are transmitted intact through decades of children's literature, are playfully mocked, and made to appear almost ridiculous. The use of humour is one of the most radical elements of this text. Nikolajeva has claimed that "today children's literature has an important

cultural role: it is the sanctuary where laughter, in particular archaic and carnivalistic laughter, is not only allowed but also positively encouraged" (1995, p.189). Alexander's text harnesses the subversive power of laughter in order to undermine the generic form of the "Heroic Era" narrative, and the figures at the centre of these stories and, in doing so, she also revises the story of the *Endurance* to highlight those characters and events commonly overlooked in other retellings for both adults and children.

A great deal of the humour in this text lies in the disparity between Mrs Chippy's attitude and his nature as a cat. This disjunction is used not only to mock the conventions of the genre, it is also used to explore the power relationships within the narrative. Roderick McGillis argues that "big and little things inform much of children's literature […] Size and the changing of size interest children because children understand their own powerlessness and they enjoy contemplating the possibilities of power" (2009, p.260). Mrs Chippy's small physical size is contrasted humorously with his extremely large ego. He repeatedly asserts his vital role in the ship, his skills, and his expertise. However, the imbalance of power which exists between Mrs Chippy and his fellow travellers is highlighted in the text on numerous occasions as he is lifted, pulled, carried, or otherwise bodily moved by the crew. Alexander writes: "Rudely pulled from my watch station, I was carried over his head towards my shipmates, who had been observing the kennel ruckus from the rail with great amusement" (p.133). Like a child, Mrs Chippy is subject to the will of the adults around him and can be physically moved despite protestations. These incidents are always depicted so as to solicit laughter from the reader, and yet when seen in the context of Mrs Chippy's eventual death at the hands of the crew, and his powerlessness to prevent his death, the sharp imbalance of power gains a darker aspect. Nikolajeva writes,

> Under the influence of political satire animals in children's books also assumed completely new functions, crossing the boundaries of traditional fables. Instead of

> representing human beings in disguise, animals became the human's antagonists […] These animals represent both children and the common people, though as a metaphor for disobedience and no longer in a Romantic sense. (1995, p.188)

If we read Mrs Chippy along these lines and see the character as representative of children in this text, it is possible to read this tale, too, in relation to aetonormative power relations. Alexander makes aetonormative power structures overt in her novel as we see the smallest member of crew being physically dominated by his companions. Despite his independent nature, he is highly reliant on those around him for food, for comfort, and for his safety. Due to his size and lack of speech he cannot protest or prevent his physical restriction to or removal from various spaces within the ship. In the end, the crew can be seen to abuse their authority in the text through a failure to protect Mrs Chippy, despite his evident love for and trust in them. Through killing Mrs Chippy, they extinguish his might. Unlike *The White Darkness*, this text does not subvert aetonormative power relations but highlights the potential for abuse within these structures.

Rethinking Scott and Shackleton

In *The White Darkness* and *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* there is a reassessment of the figure of the Antarctic hero who is at the centre of the "Heroic Era" narrative. McCaughrean specifically focuses on deconstructing the image of Scott and Oates, while Alexander focuses on other actors in the *Endurance* adventure in a way which questions Shackleton's status as the perfect leader of men.

Mrs Chippy questions the romantic view of Shackleton as the *beau ideal* of polar exploration and refocuses attention on some of Shackleton's colleagues, specifically Chippy's 'mate', the carpenter McNish. Throughout the text, Alexander attempts to rehabilitate the image of McNish, who is often marginalised or vilified in other retellings of the *Endurance*

narrative. Alfred Lansing called McNish "dour old Chippy McNeish" (1959, p.37) while Paul Dowswell presents the carpenter as the lone voice of disloyalty who endangered the entire crew through his sedition:

> If McNeish was allowed to become the focus for other resentful crew members, the party would split into warring factions, and they would all be doomed. Forceful action was required. McNeish was bluntly told he would be shot if he did not obey orders. (2002, p.89)

If part of Shackleton's heroic legacy is rooted in his ability to remain eternally hopeful, to endure and never surrender, then McNish is Shackleton's foil – eternally discontent, unable to endure suffering without complaint. Through situating Mrs Chippy at the centre of the narrative, Alexander allows McNish to appear in a much more forgiving role, as carer and companion of Mrs Chippy. Alexander has stated that "the reason that I was compelled to write *Mrs Chippy* was to resurrect the memory of McNish" (pers. comm., January 16, 2016). This desire to rehabilitate McNish's reputation is evident in the sympathetic portrait she creates, built around a loving relationship with Mrs Chippy. We frequently hear that Mrs Chippy "bunked between his ankles" (p.14) and the great affection of McNish for Mrs Chippy is made evident throughout: "I went over to join my mate. 'Aye, Chippy's a champion,' he said, and pulled me into his lap" (p.25). Just like the frequent references to food, these descriptions of the close physical relationship between not only Chippy and McNish, but also Chippy and the other members of the crew, create a softer image of the explorers and highlight the desire for physical comfort and the important role played by the animals on the expedition. In doing so, they undermine the hyper-masculine image which has become connected with "Heroic Era" explorers.

Alexander's primary means of subverting Shackleton's heroic status is not through direct criticism but through omission. There are no lengthy descriptions of Shackleton's

genius or heroism here. Instead, he is a shadowy figure in the text, which allows others, including McNish and the stowaway Perce Blackborow, to take centre stage. Blackborow was only 18 when he stowed away on the *Endurance*. He was discovered shortly after the ship departed for the Antarctic and took up a role as steward on the ship. His initial actions as a stowaway sometimes feature in retellings of the *Endurance* narrative, but Alexander provides a fuller picture of the sailor, and how he grew into his role on the ship to become an important part of the crew. The focus on Mrs Chippy as protagonist, does however, have inevitable consequences for the representation of Shackleton, given Shackleton's direct involvement in his eventual death. The text refrains from detailing the death of Mrs Chippy, instead allowing the reader to infer the grim conclusion for themselves. If the reader is not explicitly shown the final act, it is certainly hinted at. Shackleton's insistence on leaving all but the essentials behind is noted by Mrs Chippy but is not considered a cause for concern:

> The Boss continued to explain that we would shortly begin our Imperial walk towards the nearest land, and that we must ruthlessly strip our possessions to the barest minimum. "The value of everything you carry must be weighed against your survival," he said. 'Anything that cannot pull its weight or is not useful to the Expedition must be put down.' My word, this was rather stiff! Luckily I have only my bowl and blanket and my mate will see to those. (p.167)

If the subtle reference to animal euthanasia ("must be put down") is missed, the consequences of Shackleton's decision become clear to the astute reader through the reactions of Mrs Chippy's companions: "Suddenly I looked up and saw all of my shipmates gathered round me, looking very disconsolate. Clark stooped and picked me up and began to stroke me. I expect he's thinking of all those nets and bottles he will have to leave behind" (p.167). As his friends say their solemn goodbyes Mrs Chippy is simply enjoying the company and planning ahead. The fact that his life might be in danger is unthinkable to him. The utter trust that Mrs

Chippy has in McNish, and in Shackleton as 'The Boss' makes their eventual betrayal of him appear extremely cruel. The story of Shackleton's *Endurance* is a story of success because of the survival of all of the human crew. Alexander obscures the eventual success to end at the moment of failure, the ship has sunk and Shackleton is forced to abandon his plans. We leave Shackleton not in heroic success but in defeat, at the moment when he orders the killing of the animals that the crew had previously treated as companions and friends.

McCaughrean is more direct in her attempts to subvert the heroic legacy of Robert Scott and Titus Oates. As detailed in Chapter Two, within children's literature, Scott has escaped the criticisms levelled at him by those such as Huntford and his successors. McCaughrean is unafraid to challenge Scott's heroic image. While many *Terra Nova* retellings for children describe the expedition leader as heroic and courageous, in McCaughrean's text, Scott is described as "vain, sanctimonious, two-faced" (p.225). More importantly, this criticism is delivered from the mouth of Oates, Scott's companion and supposed friend. It is in the description of Oates's death that McCaughrean's subversive intent becomes most apparent. Oates's heroic reputation is based largely on the gripping description of his death, and the courage he showed to sacrifice himself in order to save his friends. McCaughrean's Oates destroys this rosy image to replace it with one of dithering desperation: "I got it wrong. I should have walked out earlier. Then my dying might have made a difference […] But I funked it. I didn't want to die on my own […] I couldn't even take the coward's way out" (p. 232). The heroic image of Oates's death is further subverted as McCaughrean describes his final moments:

> I hoped I'd die in my sleep, but I didn't! So – God love them for it – my good, my dear, my beloved friends unlaced the tent flap – do you really think I could have undone frozen knots on my own, with my fingers gone? – and I crawled out of the

tent and let the blizzard do me the final kindness. But I'd waited too long! So in the end my death didn't change anything – didn't save anyone! (p.233).

This description of Oates's death undermines everything which made his actions heroic. The iconic portrait created by John Charles Dollman (Figure 7 below) captures the popular image of Oates's final actions.

Figure 7: 'A Very Gallant Gentleman' by John Charles Dollman, 1913.

Here, Oates courageously walks out of the tent and onwards into the blizzard. In contrast, McCaughrean offers us an image of a man driven mad through suffering, crawling out of the tent, collapsing in the snow, and awaiting death. What's more, the account directly contradicts Scott's claim in his diary that they "knew that poor Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman" (Scott, 2006, p.410). Instead of trying to dissuade Oates, they actively assist in his departure. The manner in which Scott and his companions faced death has become central to their heroic image. McCaughrean attacks this portrayal as an illusion and presents a far less idealised picture of their last days. McCaughrean and Alexander offer radical reassessments of the heroic figures of Scott and Shackleton. Alexander side-lines the great leader and hero,

depicting him from the perspective of a member of the crew who was killed to ensure the survival of the rest of the men, while McCaughrean reimagines some of the key events of the *Terra Nova* expedition and questions the authenticity of conventional accounts events, such as the death of Oates, upon which the explorers' heroic reputations were built.

Conclusion

The remarkable continuity that exists amongst the majority of retellings of the "Heroic Era" narratives for children ensures that stories such as McCaughrean's and Alexander's are both unusual and significant. These authors undermine key elements of the two foremost "Heroic Era" narratives: they disrupt the functioning of time with the "Heroic Era" chronotope, they interrogate the heroic figures at the centre of the *Terra Nova* and *Endurance* narratives, and they insert subversive protagonists who destabilise the conventional construction of gender in "Heroic Era" narratives and highlight or invert existing power dynamics within the narratives.

Both *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* and *The White Darkness* interrogate the established narratives of the "Heroic Era" expeditions. Yet, in the end, they also reassert the importance of these stories for children. Alexander's text finds humour in the pomposity of the figure of the Antarctic hero but she still implicitly commends her protagonist's adventurous spirit. She has argued "I very much think these stories are meaningful in the best sense, in terms of life development and imaginative development" (pers. comm., January 16, 2016). Her text emphasises that all of these stories need not be the same, that there is more than one angle to these tales, and more than one lesson to take from the events. Her representations of both Shackleton and McNish also suggest that we should find a balance in our depictions of historical figures rather than settling for hagiography.

McCaughrean's text offers a similarly ambiguous look at the "Heroic Era" stories. At the close of *The White Darkness* we have seen the character of Titus Oates physically

disintegrate, as the 'heroic' image which Sym so fully embraced is slowly dismantled. As Sym leaves the Antarctic on board an ice-breaker Oates appears to have disappeared altogether. "When I went looking though, the windows of Glasstown were all smashed, the streets deserted […] I couldn't find Titus anywhere" (p.254). Just as Sym seems to have abandoned the safety net that Titus represented, he reappears, causing Sym to declare: "Oh, Titus! It's so good to see you. So unbelievably good. Thank you" (p.258). McCaughrean here implies that although we can reassess and interrogate the established Antarctic myths, they will remain an important part of British culture. She also demonstrates the positive impact that the stories have had on Sym, as well as showing the negative aspects of Sym's retreat from reality and into the Antarctic past. It is through Sym's obsession with the Antarctic that she has learnt the skills and knowledge that help her to eventually overcome Victor and to assert herself and her autonomy. While McCaughrean certainly subverts the heroic images of Oates and Scott, by the end of the text what the explorers have lost in heroism they have gained in humanity. McCaughrean paints sympathetic portraits of real people who are unsure and afraid. Oates's description of Scott as "vain, sanctimonious, two-faced", is followed by an admission that "In the end, I loved the man. We all did. Loved every hair of his head. Because his heart was good and his intentions sound" (p.225). McCaughrean is attempting to dismantle the heroic image, without destroying the man. She is subverting the story, and the myth, which is received and repeated without interrogation within children's literature. Both *The White Darkness* and *Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition* continue to assert the relevance of the "Heroic Era" stories, but argue that the stories should be understood within a wider context of Antarctic history and, perhaps, that it is the humanity, not the heroism, which we should seek within these tales.

Chapter Five: Uncanny Adventures

Cape Disappointment sits on the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula located between Exasperation Inlet and Scar Inlet. First discovered by Otto Nordenskiöld who led the Swedish Antarctic Expedition in 1902, the names of the cape and the nearby inlets reflect the struggles endured by explorers who first visited the landscape. Like Desolation Island, (one of the Sub-Antarctic South Shetland Islands) and Delusion Point (also located on the Antarctic Peninsula), these places are not named after noted explorers or royalty. They do not even describe the landscape. Instead, like Scott's famous utterance, "Great God! this is an awful place" (2006, p.376), the place-names express the detrimental impact of the Antarctic landscape on the human mind. Explorers came to the Antarctic for glory, but many found only ice, death and madness, and more ice. Stephen Pyne writes: "Ice is the beginning of Antarctica and ice is its end. As one moves from perimeter to interior, the proportion of ice relentlessly increases. Ice creates more ice, and ice defines ice" (2003, p.2). Water in its various forms dominates the landscape. Elsewhere this element is life giving, here it is life-negating; drowning, freezing, and blinding beleaguered explorers. Kathryn Yusoff has explored the impediments to sight in the Antarctic including "ice-blink, exposure, superior mirages, mock suns, phantom displacements, blindings, refractions, auroras and strange weather" (Yusoff, 2008, p. 54). She looks specifically at the case of Antarctic explorer Charles Wilkes who, in 1842, stood trial by court-marital charged with "immoral mapping" (Yusoff, 2008, p.48). Yusoff's article reveals the considerable difficulty early Antarctic explorers experienced in simply attempting to see, and map, the landscape. Faced with such challenges, and the real possibility of death or serious injury in the Antarctic, many expeditions resulted in a serious deterioration in the mental health of crewmembers. Despite centuries of polar exploration in the Arctic, it was here in the Southern Continent that the

phrase “polar madness” originated. This place-specific psychosis was identified by a scientist who went south with both Scott and Shackleton, and a fear of polar madness led Admiral Byrd to pack “two coffins and twelve straitjackets” (Wheeler, 1997, p.5) when he departed for his 1928-30 US Antarctic expedition.

The accounts of Antarctic exploration compounded existing literary depictions of the landscape as an essentially uncanny space. In his foundational 1919 essay, “Das Unheimlich”, Freud describes the uncanny as “that class of the frightening” which arouses “dread and horror” and “which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (1971, p.219). Freud notes that the uncanny is connected to “death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead and to spirits and ghosts” (1971, p.241). However, as Nicholas Royle remarks:

> it can also be a matter of something strangely beautiful, bordering on ecstasy […] It can involve a feeling of something beautiful but at the same time frightening, as in the figure of a double or telepathy. It comes above all, perhaps, in the uncertainties of silence, solitude and darkness. (2003, p.1)

In Antarctica, a land filled with “silence, solitude and darkness”, the uncanny has become an important literary instrument for representing human experience in the space.

The connection between the Antarctic and the uncanny can be traced as far back as Coleridge’s foundational Antarctic text “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (1798), and was developed within Antarctic gothic texts such as Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Narrative of Gordon Arthur Pym of Nantucket* (1838) and James De Mille’s *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* (1888). In Coleridge’s “Rime” the protagonist is left alone on a ship filled with corpses after the entire crew is struck down suddenly and mysteriously. The mariner sees a ghost ship pass and asks:

> Is that woman all her crew?
>
> Is that a Death? And are there two?

Is Death that woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,

Her locks were yellow as gold:

Her skin was white as leprosy,

The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,

Who thicks man's blood with cold.

(Coleridge, 1857, lines 188-194)

The female figure here embodies the uncanny. She is a "nightmare" incarnation of the return of the dead, "Life-in-Death", with the power to compel or destroy the living. Four questions open this passage and these questions reflect the mariner's deep uncertainty about the woman he sees before him, and the situation in which he finds himself. Nicholas Royle writes that the uncanny is rooted in uncertainty:

> The uncanny is ghostly. It is concerned with the strange, weird and mysterious, with a flickering sense (but not conviction) of something supernatural. The uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced […] It is a crisis of the natural, touching upon everything that one might have thought was 'part of nature': one's own nature, human nature, the nature of reality and the world. (2003, p.1)

The Antarctic is a landscape that breeds uncertainty, with seascapes that can change from liquid to solid, and ground that can shift under one's feet; the very structure of the landscape undermines any attempt to seek security and certainty in the space. However, the Antarctic is also represented as staggeringly beautiful, and, just as there are place names that speak of human misery, there are also names that reflect the beauty of the newly discovered landscapes such as Dream Island and Paradise Harbour. The sheer scale of the Antarctic, the vast icescapes, the danger, and never-before-seen beauty evoke Royle's definition of the

uncanny as "something beautiful but at the same time frightening" (2003, p.1). The startling contrast of horror and beauty reinforces the overwhelming uncertainty about the nature of the Antarctic landscape.

The fictional adventure stories written about the Antarctic for children revel in the uncanny nature of the Antarctic landscape. The uncanny does appear in other genres of Antarctic writing for children, including those genres previously examined in this thesis such as whaling or exploration literature. References to the Antarctic as a demon stalking the explorers in the *Terra Nova* narratives, or depictions of the psychological breakdown of young whalers overwhelmed by the death they inflict and witness, create a picture of the Antarctic as an uncanny space, but in those texts the uncanny is an undercurrent, a disquieting side-note to the main action. In contrast, the texts examined in this chapter embrace the uncanny, often placing an explicit focus on uncanny themes such as uncertainty, death, the return of the dead, doubles, and madness.

I take my approach primarily from Freud's 1919 article, and from Nicholas Royle's *The Uncanny* (2003). In his article, Freud returns to the German word "unheimlich" meaning unhomely from which the term uncanny derives. He notes that the antonym of "unheimlich" is "heimlich" "meaning 'familiar', 'native', 'belonging to the home'" (1971, p.222), and records that "heimlich" can also refer to something that is "concealed, kept from sight" (p.223). Unheimlich is ostensibly the opposite of all that is heimlich. The unheimlich, then is unhomely, something strange and unfamiliar. Yet, Freud notes "What interests us most […] is to find that among its different shades of meaning the word "heimlich" exhibits one which is identical with its opposite, "unheimlich". What is heimlich thus comes to be unheimlich" (p.224). The uncanny is that which was familiar, and homely, made unhomely and strange. The recognition of the familiar in the strange increases the terrifying nature of the uncanny experience. The uncanny in Antarctic adventure literature for children is characterised by a

preoccupation with secrecy and revelation, particularly focused on the hidden history of the Antarctic landscape. The uncanny can appear in connection to individuals through figures such as ghosts or the undead, or through altered psychological states. It also appears in connection to places such as shipwrecks and chthonic spaces including chasms and tunnels that delve deep into the hidden Antarctic underworld. In the adventure texts written about the Antarctic, ships that serve as homes and sanctuaries for sailors and explorers are made unhomely through shipwreck and through the presence of supernatural or otherwise threatening forces. In order to undermine or overcome the uncanny, the protagonists must reveal that which has been hidden. Sometimes this is gold, oil, or platinum, and sometimes it is entire civilisations hidden under the Antarctic ice. Experiencing and confronting the uncanny in Antarctic adventure literature for children is nearly always connected to growth and development, often in the form of a terrifying rite-of-passage, and in recent texts a more ambiguous form of development as child characters come to know themselves and the world around them more fully.

A total of thirteen texts are examined in this chapter. All of the texts fall into the broadly defined genre of adventure literature. In *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature* (1989), Jeffrey Richards defines adventure literature as that which involves "the primacy of action as opposed to the primacy of feelings, and moreover action which is frequently imperially based as opposed to specifically England-based" (p.2). He argues that this kind of literature "exalts the warrior-explorer-engineer" (p.2). Elyssa D. Warkentin further defines the genre arguing: "An adventure narrative is characterised by a central male protagonist who typically leaves his home to face the unknown caused by forces beyond his control, undergoing hardship and danger with stoic goodwill" (2007, p.2). The fictional adventure texts examined in this chapter prioritise action over feeling, and they focus on (primarily) male protagonists who go abroad and are drawn into an adventure involving hardship and danger. The protagonists in

these texts are a mix of adolescent boys recruited to join an expedition to the Antarctic, and adult male explorers who mirror the 'real-life' explorers such as Scott and Shackleton. Many stories centre on a quest for treasure, or the desire to uncover a mystery, for example the mysterious disappearance of numerous ships in Frank Crisp's 1960 *The Ice Divers*. Like the whaling literature, the Antarctic setting is an essential element of each text, providing the uncanny backdrop to the voyage and increasing the sense of danger faced by the protagonists.

These stories can be understood within the long tradition of boys' adventure fiction. There are particular parallels to be drawn between the Antarctic adventure stories and the Robinsonade genre. Like classic Robinsonades such as Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* (1857), Marrayat's *Masterman Ready* (1841) and W.E. John's *Biggles in the South Seas* (1940), the stories frequently involve protagonists who find themselves deserted in a distant and threatening land, who must face many challenges but who inevitably overcome all odds to survive, often eventually being rewarded with 'boons' or treasures. One text in particular, Payne's *Three Boys in Antarctica* (1912) makes the connection to the Robinsonade genre overt, as will be explored in this chapter. As in Chapter One, this chapter will focus on the impact of the Antarctic setting on the adventure stories, and in particular how these texts represent the Antarctic as an inherently uncanny space.

Some of the stories can be understood as fantasy or science-fiction literature, as the supernatural elements which are hinted at within other texts become more prominent and fictional animals and humanoid cultures are revealed to be living hidden within the Antarctic. Ken Gelder asserts that "The close connection between Science Fiction and the adventure novel has both defined and troubled the genre" (2004, p.66). The fantasy adventure texts examined in this chapter demonstrate the close connection between these two genres. This chapter focuses primarily on the texts as adventure narratives, however I also explore how the appearance of the uncanny is impacted by the fantasy or science fiction aspects of particular

texts. I first examine the figures, such as ghosts, that embody the uncanny in the texts. I then analyse the sites of the uncanny focusing on the shipwreck, chthonic spaces, and the treasures that are wrested from the landscapes. Finally, the chapter scrutinises the transformative effect that encounters with the uncanny have on child characters. Ranging in publication date from 1912 to 2001, these texts demonstrate that for as long as people have been writing about the 'real' exploratory history of the Antarctic for children, they have also been reimagining the continent through fiction and inserting fictional characters into the darkest depths of the landscape.

The Uncanny Figure

In fictional Antarctic adventure narratives, the uncanny is embodied by two key figures: the ghost and the 'madman'. Throughout this chapter, I refer to 'madness' and the figure of the 'madman', rather than identifying individuals as suffering from psychological illness. I do this to reflect the language used in the primary texts and in the critical material of Freud and Royle, and importantly because madness is depicted as a form of possession in these texts, rather than as a manifestation of psychological illness. These figures and the idea of 'madness' in these texts do not represent mental illness, instead they are literary archetypes and they are used to represent the 'maddening' potential of the Antarctic landscape. The ghost falls into the category of the living dead. Deprived of a human body, the spirit lingers but is no longer subject to the metaphysical conditions that govern the world of the living. The ghost occupies a liminal position between life and death and often threatens the safety and serenity of the living with whom they come into contact. In these texts, madness, too, challenges the rules of normal behaviour as it represents our inability to control our own bodies and minds. In the adventure and fantasy texts for children madness is presented as a form of possession, the sane living individual has abandoned the rational world and been

possessed by a more sinister version of themselves, whose actions are likely to be senseless and violent.

The Ghost

The ghost is a reminder of death, sometimes violent death or even murder. Freud notes that it is death, and the return of the dead, which most often trigger feelings of the uncanny (1971, p.241). The ghost is the dead returned to exist in a liminal form within the world of the living. The ghost often possesses unnatural knowledge and dangerous secrets which threaten to destabilise established order. Antarctic adventure narratives are filled with ghosts, or the suggestion of a ghostly presence. This is the most common form that representations of the uncanny take in Antarctic literature for children. Alfred Judd's *The Secret of the Snows* (1925), focuses on the secrets of the Antarctic and imagines the landscape as peopled with spirits who act as the "grim guardians of the waste, jealous spirits of the ice who resent man's prying into the heart of the unknown. They strive to hold him back; they compel him to struggle for his footing all the way" (p.9). Judd does not specify if these spirits are the ghosts of explorers who have perished in the landscape or the supernatural guardians of the continent, however he is clear that they are antagonistic figures who must be confronted and defeated. In W.E. Johns's *Biggles Breaks the Silence* (1949), the protagonist Biggles and his crew travel to the Antarctic to locate treasure supposedly hidden in the wreck of *The Polar Star*. When they find the wreck, Biggles' colleague, Ginger, enters and immediately feels an unearthly presence:

> His gaze seemed drawn irresistibly to the far side of the room, to the organ, where the shadow had stopped. His eyes wandered over it. They halted abruptly, and remained fixed, staring at something that stared back at him through a hole in the ice. It was an eye. He could see it distinctly; a human eye it appeared to be, for

> surrounding it was the small part of a dead white face. It did not move, but it glowed, as if imbued by inhumane fire. (1949, p.54-55)

Here we have two different manifestations of the uncanny. The references to the "small part of a dead white face" seems to imply, but does not absolutely confirm, a ghostly presence. Johns uses phrases such as "as if" to demonstrate Ginger's intellectual uncertainty. The disembodied eye also represents a form of the uncanny connected to bodily mutilation or dissection. Freud argues: "Dismembered limbs, a severed head, a hand cut off at the wrist, […] feet which dance by themselves […] all these have something peculiarly uncanny about them" (1971, p.244). He argues that these things prompt feels of the uncanny because of their "proximity to the castration-complex" (1971, p.244). In an Antarctic context, however, dismembered limbs have added resonance because of the ability of the Antarctic ice to freeze limbs, to cause gangrene and to result in the loss of fingers, limbs, and even senses such as sight. Biggles and his crew have just arrived in the Antarctic when they come across the shipwreck, and Ginger encounters the disembodied eye. For these explorers, the experience is a portent of the dangers that their surroundings pose. Johns dwells on the psychological impact that the eye has upon Ginger: "Perhaps for the first time he comprehended fully the meaning of the word fear – the fear that comes from something beyond human understanding. He was not conscious of this" (1949, p.56). Johns connects the fear that Ginger experiences with the repressed and the unconscious, and in doing so, explicitly links Ginger's experience with Freud's work. Fear of this ghostly figure continues to haunt Ginger and the other characters until the crew finally trace the root cause of the events back to the world of the living, thus resolving the disturbing questions raised by the incident and therefore undermining its uncanny effect.

A similar scenario plays out in Frank Crisp's *The Ice Divers* (1960) as Dirk Rogers, the protagonist, is entreated by a whaling company to visit a remote Antarctic whaling and

research station to investigate a series of bizarre disappearances. The whalers suggest that these disappearances have a supernatural cause: "Coincidence cannot account for such a sinister record. There is something wrong at Vogel Inlet – something which must be discovered for the sake of the men who have lost their lives!" (1960, p.11). For Dr. Hearl, the research scientist who has contracted Dirk, the "sinister record" points to a malevolent spirit which, like a Will o' the Wisp, uses an "eerie" and "peculiar luminous effect" (Crisp, 1960, p.38) to lead unwitting sailors to their deaths. Although Dirk at first considers the possibility of a supernatural explanation for the disappearance it later becomes clear that the perpetrator is not a spectre or a ghost but a live human being. In both Johns's *Biggles Breaks the Silence* and Crisp's *The Ice Divers*, it at first seems as though there is a ghost haunting the landscape. The characters are deeply disturbed by the possibility of a supernatural presence and the reader too is encouraged to share this unease as they too begin to suspect the presence of a ghost. It is not until late in both texts that the figure is revealed to be a living sailor who has succumbed to madness, rather than a ghost. In this way, the uncanny uncertainty is maintained for both the reader and the protagonists for a significant period of both narratives. By revealing the ghost to in fact be a 'mad' sailor, these texts create one uncanny figure only to supplant it with another.

The ghost of Captain Cathcardo is a key protagonist in Margaret Mahy's 2001 *Riddle of the Frozen Phantom*. Awoken by a magical pendant wielded by a young girl, Sophie Sapwood, the reader experiences the Captain's realisation of his own supernatural state from the perspective of the ghost:

> But he couldn't walk down that gangplank. It wasn't just the iciness of it. He couldn't so much as set foot on it. Whenever he tried, the air seemed to thicken and freeze in front of him. Try as he might, he could not take a single step away from *The Riddle*. Suddenly the Captain understood! He wasn't an ordinary captain

> any more. He was a ghost captain … a phantom … a spook! He wasn't living on *The Riddle* (wherever it might happen to be), he was haunting it. He must be dead. (p.18)

In the other texts, the reader experiences ghosts only in relation to their felt effects on the protagonists. Here, in contrast, we are offered an insight into the mind of the ghost, and asked to empathise with his plight.

This focalisation through the character of the Captain continues throughout the text and builds readers' compassion for this liminal figure:

> It is hard for a ghost to feel terrified. They can be puzzled, irritated and lonely, and of course, they can frighten other people, but they are almost never afraid themselves. Yet now, the Captain (who had been such an adventurous captain all his days – one who had tackled snowstorms and walked on hot meteorites), felt himself melting with terror. His mitts actually began to dissolve in the cabin air … It seemed to stare back at him through its shroud of ice. Deep inside that shroud he could make out a twisted face … the face of a dead man … his own face. But that was not what terrified him. He already knew that he must be dead. But through that glacial shroud he could see that the body had a knife plunged into it. Many years ago someone had stabbed him and left him dying in his bunk. (p. 102)

Here the captain is faced with his double. He sees his body, which he recognises is his, but at the same time, he experiences himself outside this body, looking back at his inanimate remains. Royle notes that the double is uncanny because he "becomes the ghastly harbinger of death" (2003, p.9). For the Captain, his double is not only a harbinger of death, but concrete proof of death and of murder. The Captain also feels alienation from himself as his body becomes an object of terror, and a visible manifestation of a horrific and violent act. The reader, too, is encouraged to experience the discovery of the body as horrifying, the body

is described as having a “twisted face” surrounded by a “shroud of ice”. While the reader is encouraged to empathise with the shock experienced by the Captain they are simultaneously encouraged to feel horror and dread at the grim discovery and the ghost’s supernatural presence.

In this text, the protagonists are not asked to defeat the figure of the uncanny but to assist it. The child reader is encouraged to empathise with the Captain following on the lead of the child protagonists who learn to see past the Captain’s uncanny nature and understand that the ghostly Captain means them no harm. The children along with their father, Bonniface, and his colleague/love interest, Corona, expose the Captain’s murderer, and confront his heir, the villainous Rancid Swarthy, who has profited from his ancestor’s misdeeds. Swarthy threatens to murder the family in order to ensure his secrets remain buried. The ghost, who has up to this point been benevolent, displays his deadly potential:

> And then the ghost slowly took its own form once more. Somehow, it flowed out around Rancid, and not merely around him either, but right through him. Rancid gasped … struggled … crumpled and fell to his knees, giving strange whooping cries almost as if his throat and lungs had been filled with snow. The ghost moved away from him, leaving him twisting on the floor. (2001, p.169)

The words “somehow”, “strange” and “almost as if” indicate the unexplained and supernatural powers the ghost displays. Captain Cathcardo occupies a space between life and death and this incident demonstrates that he has the power to bring the living into the world of the dead simply by immersing them in his ghostly form.

The ghostly figures in Antarctic adventure narratives are fictional representations of the lethal threats posed by the landscape. Tragic stories of explorers such as Scott and his crew, or Franklin in the Arctic, provide a model that these fictional stories build on and exaggerate for uncanny effect. The disembodied faces, limbs, or eyes represent the landscape’s ability to

degrade the human form, and to reduce healthy and strong men to invalids or to corpses. Figures like the Captain in Mahy's text, reflect those other explorers or seamen who travelled south and never returned. Death features in many genres of Antarctic literature, whether it is the death of whales, or members of the whaling crews, or the death of heroic explorers. Antarctic adventure narratives foreground death, and imagines a landscape transformed by its macabre history into an essentially uncanny space, populated by the ghosts or other spirits of the dead.

Figures of Madness

The second uncanny figure in this body of literature is the person gripped by madness. In the adventure literature written for children, the Antarctic is represented as a landscape that provokes madness. This reflects early gothic Antarctic literature where the threat of madness hung over all who entered the landscape. Elizabeth Leane argues that the unsettling accounts of early explorers draw on, and add to, the wider history of gothic literature written about the continent (2012, p.53-54). Leane highlights the horror and potential for madness inherent in many "Heroic Era" expeditionary accounts, focusing particularly on the account of Morton Moyes, a member of Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition (1911-1914). Moyes's team accidentally left him alone in an "isolated hut near the edge of an ice shelf for more than two months" (2012, p.53). Unsure of what had happened, and unable to leave his post he struggled to retain his sanity:

> The silence that surrounded him quickly came to seem 'oppressive and unnerving', the creaking of the glacier 'ominous' and his own laughter 'uncanny'. He began to think of the glacier as 'something alive' and its creaking as 'ominous'; the space outside his hut was a 'creeping waste'; his solitude was like 'an unseen presence'; and when he played music, he felt he was revealing himself

> to ‘some prowling enemy’ […] Alone in the hut, he recalled, he speculated on his own end, wondering whether when his fellow expedition members eventually returned, they would find him ‘raving mad or dead in this pit of ice’. (2012, p.53-54)

The landscape in many Antarctic texts for adults seems to offer two alternatives to those who find themselves shipwrecked or isolated: death or madness. The ghost and the madman are representatives of these two unhappy options. Many of the texts for children draw on accounts such as Moyes’s to depict the Antarctic as a landscape where the sanity of even the most grounded and logical individual is under threat. The figure of the madman embodies the ‘maddening’ potential of the landscape.

In “Das Unheimliche”, Freud analyses the uncanny effect of madness only from the perspective of the third-person who is observing someone in the grip of madness. He does not consider the uncanny effect of experiencing a psychological illness, or breakdown, despite the significant uncanny potential in such an occurrence. Freud argues:

> The uncanny effect of epilepsy and of madness has the same origin. The layman sees in them the workings of forces hitherto unsuspected in his fellow-men but at the same time he is dimly aware of them in a remote corner of his own being. (1971, p.243)

For Freud, madness is uncanny to the observer because the ‘mad’ person appears to be controlled by unseen forces, and the observing individual is “dimly aware” of the possibility of madness within themselves. The children’s texts, too, present this kind of external view of madness, which is intended to unsettle the protagonists and readers alike. Throughout Antarctic adventure literature for children, characters are often gripped by madness, and it is represented not as a psychological illness which is simply another manifestation of ill-health, but as possession which is nearly always fatal for those afflicted. Alfred Judd’s *The Secret of*

the Snows (1925) details the journey of a father and his two sons to the Antarctic on a mission to mine for coal. The boys' father, Captain Samways, secretly intends to mine for gold in the landscape. When they finally do discover gold, the sole Norwegian member of the crew, Karsen, is driven to madness through greed. He betrays his colleagues, sabotages their equipment and absconds hoping to leave them for dead in the ice before lodging his own claim to legal ownership of the gold.

> As the sledge swept away, Olaf Karsen leapt aboard. He turned just as he was being swung out of sight and in his tones there was something of madness. 'It's gold!' he shouted – 'and every man for himself!' Then came the bend and he was gone! (1925, p.129)

The phrase "something of madness" fosters uncanny uncertainty, and foreshadows the sailor's subsequent illogical actions. Forsaking reason and clear judgment, he continues his maniacal dash for the ship during a severe blizzard and freezes to death. Captain Samways and his son later find his frozen body in the snow, still attached to the sledge. Edward Evans's *Mystery of the Polar Star* (1927) offers a racially-prejudiced account of "polar madness" by locating susceptibility to madness as an essentially racial trait. Evans's text features a character who is known only as "the Nigger". At the opening of the text there are two characters who are the antagonists to the lead character, a young man, Clive. One of the antagonists, Slosher, is white and British (and allowed a name, albeit a nickname), the other is black and his nationality is never disclosed. Using reason and kindness, Clive is able to rehabilitate Slosher, but "the Nigger" is depicted as being beyond salvation. His actions are malicious, unpredictable, and often to his own detriment. Slosher says of "the Nigger" that, "He wants bringing to his senses" (1930, p.172), but there is no psychological recovery for a character who is depicted as being beyond reason. Eventually "the Nigger's" murderous insanity leads to his death: pursued across the Antarctic ice by the widow of one of his victims he is suddenly consumed

by the landscape. A chasm opens and he is swallowed by the ice, which here performs a retributive function. The sudden death of the primary antagonist is depicted as a fitting end to a character whose madness threatened the stability and security of the crew. Evans's text plays on damaging racial stereotypes, locating reason and intellect in white British characters, who are depicted as the antipathy to the irrational black antagonist. Evans positions the Antarctic landscape as a triggering factor, that forces characters to reveal their underlying traits.

Evans's texts feature another character struck by polar madness. Bully Barraclough, the Captain of *The Polar Star* is described as "the brutal, violent skipper, [who] had drunk himself into a state of absolute madness. Nobody knew what he would do next, and the few fit people on board went about in sheer terror of their lives" (1930, p.199). For both "the Nigger" and Bully Barraclough, their time in the Antarctic exacerbates already violent tendencies, and fosters instability. Bully's crew experience him as uncanny because his madness makes him unpredictable and his actions defy normal logic. He, too, is eventually killed when he sets the ship on fire, despite being trapped inside. In Evans's text, those characters who succumb to madness are effectively like the living dead, there is little effort made to save them as they move inexorably towards death, creating lethal threats for their crewmates along the way.

In Crisp's *The Ice Divers*, Dirk and his young cousin Jim follow a trail of dead bodies and eventually discover that a living human rather than a ghost is responsible for apparently supernatural events. Captain Varstein, has been keeping a deadly watch on Vogel Inlet, accompanied only by an old engineer, Borg, who was too frail to escape with the rest of the crew when their ship was wrecked. Borg tells them: "For nearly ten years he has been out of his mind and I have lived alone with him" (1960, p.92). The engineer's comment highlights the liminal position that madness confers to individuals, as Borg explains that he has been

living both “alone” and “with him” because the Captain is simultaneously present and absent. He is both familiar and strange. Like Bully Barraclough, Captain Varstein is responsible for the deaths of some of his crew, who abandoned the ship in terror, only to succumb to the harsh environment outside, and, like Barraclough, Varstein eventually eviscerates himself and his ship in a huge explosion. Both Evans and Crisp position the eventual death of the ‘madman’ as a cleansing of the landscape. There is little desire to rehabilitate or rescue the mad men in these tales, and instead they are simply unpredictable and deadly opponents who must be defeated before the protagonists can complete their assigned tasks and leave the Antarctic in safety. In all of these texts, the madman presents an immediate threat to the lives of the protagonists; however, they also represent a more abstract threat, highlighting the possibility for madness within the protagonist. While characters like “the Nigger” represent the ability of the landscape to exacerbate latent susceptibility to madness, others like Captain Varstein denote the thin line between sanity and madness, and the ability of the Antarctic to push individuals over that line.

In the adventure narratives for children, the Antarctic is a maddening landscape and many characters succumb to madness after they are trapped by the Antarctic ice; Bully Barraclough, “the Nigger” and Captain Varstein, are all sailors on ships that have become encased in ice. Explorers who went south in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century faced the possibility of becoming trapped in a continent that does not support human life, and the threat of polar madness affecting their crew or even themselves. In 1897, the *Belgica*, became frozen in the Antarctic ice and was trapped for 347 days, forcing the expedition to become the first to ‘overwinter’ in the Antarctic. D.W.H. Walton describes the expedition stating, “One man died, two went mad and some of the remainder suffered from lethargy and depression during the long winter” (1987, p.18). The Antarctic adventure narratives develop on non-fiction accounts of exploration, focusing on the landscape’s uncanny ability to

transform individuals, to rob them of their sanity, and to create chaos among the crew. The madness of figures such as Bully Barraclough and Captain Varstein is particularly unsettling because of their position as Captains. They are leaders who have abdicated their posts and abandoned any duty of care towards their crew. The Shackleton narratives celebrate a heroic leader who risks his own life and wellbeing to ensure the safety of his crew, and describe the reassurance that his crew feel knowing that they are in his care. The adventure texts imagine a bleak reversal of this situation, where the leader creates confusion and anarchy, and abandons the crew to battle the hostile elements alone.

Uncanny Places: chthonic spaces, shipwrecks

In some adventure texts, it is simply the vast Antarctic landscape itself which stimulates an uncanny sensation in the protagonists. In F.E. Davy Dickie's *Snow in Summer*, the young protagonist, Peter, feels instant unease when he enters the Antarctic seascape:

> It created awe and dismay inside him. He felt he was actually shrinking in size. Here indeed was unknown terrain, so vast that it appeared menacing. Here the white, eternally white, surfaces offered no welcome. He felt unsafe, completely alone, almost as if no other living person existed apart from himself. Even Mr Doran was separated from him by millions of miles of white and silence. (1967, p.75)

Royle argues that the uncanny undermines "one's sense of oneself" (2003, p.1). Entering the Antarctic has an intense effect on Peter's sense of himself, and his relationship to his environment and his colleagues. He feels "unsafe", menaced, and unwelcome, but these feelings are not prompted by specific threats, but by absence; absence of colour and of life, which renders the landscape unfamiliar and unhomely. The child reader of *Snow in Summer*, is encouraged to understand the Antarctic as a fundamentally uncanny and otherworldly

space. The uncanny in this text is not connected to the dead, or ghosts, or shipwrecks, but to the physical landscape of the Antarctic and, as a result, the uncanny effect of the text cannot be undermined, as it is in *The Ice Divers* or *Biggles* when suspicions of the supernatural are disproven. Instead, the uncanny effect remains for the protagonist and for the reader. In other texts, the uncanny is located within, or attached to specific sites within the Antarctic. Two specific types of site reappear throughout this genre of literature in connection with the uncanny: the shipwreck and chthonic spaces. Chthonic spaces within Antarctic adventure literature include tunnels, caves, and chasms all of which allow access to spaces hidden under the Antarctic ice. The authors of many Antarctic adventure texts for children examined here clearly draw on the genre of subterranean narratives, in particular Jules Verne's 1864 classic *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. John Mackie's *The Great Antarctic* (1913) includes a protagonist, Otto, who shares a name with Verne's central protagonist, and both texts feature hidden subterranean worlds. Echoing the premise of Verne's text, in *The Great Antarctic*, and other texts such as Christopher Beck's *People of the Chasm (1923)*, it is the Antarctic volcano Mount Erebus that acts as the portal to another world or hidden spaces beneath the Antarctic ice. Verne set his story in Iceland; by relocating the action to the Antarctic authors such as Mackie and Beck are able to draw on Antarctic fantasy and science fiction including another of Verne's texts, *An Antarctic Mystery* (1897) as well as classic Antarctic texts such as Poe's *Pym* and Coleridge's 'Rime'. Beck in particular combines the subterranean setting and prehistoric monsters of *Journey to the Centre of the World*, with the hidden Antarctic worlds explored in *An Antarctic Mystery* and Pym. In all of the adventure texts, the Antarctic setting functions to further isolate the protagonists, and allows authors to draw on existing perceptions of the landscape as an uncanny and deadly space.

The Shipwreck

The shipwreck features in adventure and fantasy literature both as a pivotal event in the stories and as a location for action. Like a ruined home, a shipwreck was once intended to provide shelter, but has lost its functionality. It is an object built for movement that has become terminally still. Even more powerfully than a ruined house, the shipwreck is a site of failure, of suffering, and of death. In Antarctic adventure literature for children, the shipwreck is intimately connected with the figures of the ghost and the madman.

G. Warren Payne's 1912 *Three Boys in Antarctica* begins with a shipwreck that strands the three young protagonists in the Antarctic:

> It was some minutes before a sense of what had happened came to them. They were in a sheltered nook far up the face of an ice-cliff, half buried in drifted snow. […] But what of the yacht? Cautiously creeping towards the storm-threshed ice-cliff, they peered over the brink. No trace of the gallant vessel or of her genial owner and his light-hearted crew remained. The sea which had swept them up into the ice-cliff had sucked her back and down into the black depths. (p.9)

Like the mouth of a giant monster, the Antarctic sea has consumed the yacht and its crew, leaving nothing but the three boys, who find themselves stranded on an iceberg in the middle of the Antarctic. In the first instance of uncanny doubling in the text, the boys discover that the iceberg onto which they were thrown contains the wreck of another ship.

> Empty state-cabins, tarnished and weatherworn, opened from the upper deck. Ropes which had lain for years, rotting where they lay in coiled heaps about the deck greeted their first enquiring glances as they carefully climbed inboard. Stumps of masts, remnants of steam winches, and other deck paraphernalia of an up-to-date cargo and passenger boat lay round them in ruins. (1912, p.16)

The shipwreck contains the eerie echoes of its past inhabitants, the empty cabins where young men like them once slept and lived, and ropes which had been held and moved daily lie still, rendered futile by the disaster that has befallen the crew. The shipwreck encased in the ice is reminiscent of the disaster they have just suffered, and prescient of the dangers they will face. Jane Suzanne Carroll in *Landscape in Children's Literature* writes:

> All ruins are 'haunted by the presences of another age.' By showing outward and visible signs of ageing, the ruin epitomises the passage of time, thus connecting us to the time in which it was built, and through its various processes of decay and collapse. (2011, p.157)

In T*hree Boys in Antarctica*, and many other Antarctic adventure and fantasy texts for children, the shipwreck is haunted; sometimes literally haunted by the figure of the ghost, and sometimes, as in Payne's text, by the visible traces of previous inhabitants. The shipwreck crosses temporal boundaries, connecting the past to the present, but the past that the shipwreck evokes is one mired in death and disaster.

Required to make a home in this unhomely space, Payne's protagonists begin searching the wreck. Attempting to raise the other boys' spirits, the oldest boy, Jack, declares with "forced gaiety", "'We are monarchs of all we survey' You know the rest" (1912, p.18). This line is one of many in the text referencing island castaway narratives, in this case Jack is specifically referencing William Cowper's poem "Verses Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk" published in 1782. In *Three Boys in Antarctica* is a complex intertextual narrative itself as an Antarctic Robinsonade, but which effectively subverts many of the imperialist themes connected with the Robinsonade genre[14]. One of the ways that Payne subverts the idealised image of imperialism within the Robinsonade narrative is through reference to Cowper's poem, from which the phrase "monarch of all [I] survey" derives. The

[14] I have explored Payne's text as an anti-Robinsonade in an article "'What a Crusoe crowd we shall make!': Destabilising Imperialist Attitudes to Space in G. Warren Payne's *Three Boys in Antarctica*" in Didactics and the Modern Robinsonade, Ian Kinane (Ed), Liverpool: Liverpool University press, forthcoming.

poem tells the story of a man stranded on a deserted island. Cowper's Selkirk declares himself monarch of all he surveys, but he follows this up with an acknowledgement that, "My right there is none to dispute" (Cowper, 1835, line 2). The first verse of Cowper's poem ends:

> O Solitude! where are the charms,
>
> That sages have seen in thy face?
>
> Better dwell in the midst of alarms
>
> Than reign in this horrible place.
>
> (Cowper, 1835, lines 5-8)

Cowper's poem focuses on the hardships and despair experienced by the castaway, and the designation of the poem's protagonist as "monarch" and "Lord" is ironic, as the titles lose meaning in his desolate setting. Payne evokes the ironic approach taken by Cowper in his reference to the boys as "monarchs of all we survey" which occurs as the boys wander through the wreck of a ship, embedded in an iceberg, floating uncontrollably in Antarctic waters. There are "none to dispute" the boys' claims to ownership because both their own crew, and the crew of the shipwreck in which they take shelter, have perished. The shipwreck is later swept off the ice-berg and sunk, destroying their efforts to create a safe shelter in the Antarctic. The multiple shipwrecks in this text are evidence of man's inability to control the Antarctic environment, and the suddenness and brutality of death in this landscape. In *Three Boys in Antarctica*, Payne creates a picture of the Antarctic as an uncanny space, a place filled with death, and reminders of the dead. The boys find themselves in a landscape that breeds uncertainty and terror through storms, blizzards and crevasses that prevent them from ever fully understanding or feeling safe in their surroundings. Payne builds an uncanny and essentially ecophobic picture of the Antarctic to undermine imperialist attitudes towards space which pervade the Robinsonade genre, primarily the idea that European men can conquer and subdue wild landscapes. Through representing the Antarctic as an uncanny, and therefore

uncontrollable and undesirable place, he characterises imperialist efforts in the Antarctic as both ludicrous and futile. It is notable that there are no treasures to be unearthed or retrieved from the landscape in this text, unlike the vast majority of other adventure literature written about the Antarctic for children. Here the prize is simply survival.

Like *Three Boys in Antarctica*, many texts feature more than one shipwreck, indicating the important place that this uncanny site holds in this body of literature. In Evans's *Mystery of the Polar Star*, Clive follows a grisly trail of clues to the site of the wrecked *Polar Star*. He first discovers a wooden cross marking a makeshift grave. On the cross there are words offering a contradictory version of the events that led to the death of the men buried in the ice: "the words 'killed' and 'accidentally' had been scratched over by blue pencil and in rough capitals 'MURDERED' had been substituted' (1930, p.170) Evans writes, 'Truly the fate of the Polar Star was shrouded in mystery. It was a most uncanny business' (p.170). This first clue is an indication of the death and confusion that await Clive at the end of his quest. The next clue that Clive finds is a small boat, upturned, and covered by a canopy. When the canopy is lifted "a face peered out. Clive had never seen such a face; it was hardly human" (p.129). The men inside the boat occupy a liminal position between the dead and the living, existing perilously in the moments before their bodies are transformed into corpses. An environment in which water inhibits rather than enables movement has impeded their boat. Instead of transporting the men to safety their wrecked boat has become their coffin. The upturned boat signifies the altered function.

The second shipwreck Clive discovers is that of the *Polar Star*. As he approaches the wreck, he surveys the horrific scene:

> To put it plainly, she looked a picture of desolation. What few sails were still bent to the yards hung in threads and tatters, some of her spars were broken, the peak

> was drooped from its halliards having carried away, and such running rigging as was in place hung in confused bights and tangles. (p.201-202)

Evans describes the ship as being "like some mongrel dog with the mange" (p.204). When Clive boards the ship, he is met with the stench of death "of rotting seal carcases" and "refuse heaps" (p.205). Trapped firm in the pack ice the ship is a prisoner of the Antarctic landscape and its derelict status reflects the mental and physical state of the crew, many of whom are dying or dead from violent assault, scurvy, or disease. Clive encounters one crewmember who holds up "a fingerless hand" (p.205) and declares himself beyond cure. Like the ghost, this man is living death, a human ruin, technically within the world of the living but with one foot (and several fingers) in the next world. Clive learns that the shipwreck has been the site of violence, murder, and disease. The wreck of *The Polar Star* is ruled over by the madman, Bully Barraclough. The destruction of the ship results in the eradication of both a figure and a site of the uncanny in this text.

W.E. Johns's *Biggles Breaks the Silence* (1949) also contains two shipwrecks. The first is the wreck of the *Starry Crown*, a ship that disappeared in the Antarctic and was rumoured to contain one tonne of gold on board when it vanished. The search for this shipwreck is the instigator for action in the novel, however, from the outset, Biggles is clear that there are many dangers associated with such a search. Before finally agreeing to take on the challenge, Biggles details the story of another ship that went in search of the *Starry Crown* only to suffer a similarly grim fate:

> The *Black Dog* was caught between two bergs and crushed flat. The only two men to get ashore were Last and Manton […] At any rate, after the *Black Dog* had gone down they were able to walk across the ice to the Starry Crown. They found things just the same as when the ship had been abandoned […] After some months the solitude drove Manton out of his mind, and he tried to murder Last. There was

> a fight, and it ended by Last shooting Manton dead. He buried him in the ice, built a cairn of ice blocks over his grave, and topped it with a board with the dead man's name on it. (2001, p.15)

The names that Johns chooses for these characters can be connected with the uncanny picture of the Antarctic that he creates in this text. Manton has dual meanings, it is a name for a gun or a pistol, named after Joe Manton, the noted gunsmith (1766-1835). The roots of the word come from the Latin *mantellum*, meaning mantle: a cloak or covering (Weekley, 1967, p.892). This combines to create a word connected with both violence and concealment and it is used to name a character who committed violence and whose body is then concealed through the act of burial. The choice of Last as the name for the other man in this brief story is equally significant. To 'last' can mean 'to endure' but it can also mean 'final' – the last one. In his conflict with Manton, Last manages to 'outlast' his opponent, and as a result, finds himself as the final (or last) survivor of the crew of the *Black Dog*. Following the deaths of the rest of the crew, and his ordeal with Manton, Last eventually finds himself alone, surrounded by "the uncertainties of silence, solitude and darkness" that Royle connects with the uncanny (Royle, 2003, p.1). This short story, told at the beginning of the text, sets the tone of the events to come. From this point on, the other characters are aware that they are facing great danger if they proceed with their voyage, and the reader too begins to anticipate the horrors that might lie ahead. There is a sense of uncanny doubling as Biggles and his crew retrace the steps of the ill-fated crew of the *Black Dog*, the knowledge of the previous disaster shadowing their every move.

In Antarctic adventure narratives, the shipwreck is an anchor site for the figures of the ghost and the madman. It is a site that can provoke an experience of the uncanny on its own, or can conceal uncanny figures. The shipwreck comes to symbolise the destructive potential

of the Antarctic landscape, and is a portent of the death and madness that this landscape can provoke in sailors or explorers who become trapped in the space.

Chthonic Spaces

Antarctic adventure fiction for children is preoccupied with that which is hidden, with secrets and revelations. The protagonists in these texts delve into the chthonic spaces of the Antarctic in an effort to force the landscape to reveal its secrets. The chthonic spaces into which the protagonists descend can be chasms, crevasses, caves, or tunnels, all of which are spaces of great uncertainty, and places of literal and figurative darkness. Entry into the Antarctic underworld offers the possibility of exposing the buried secrets of the Antarctic, but these are also completely unknown spaces that contain a variety of threats. Royle describes "live burial" as quintessentially uncanny (2003, p.2). He also argues that an encounter with the uncanny is "an experience of liminality" (2003, p.2). Many of the chthonic spaces explored in the adventure texts are dangerously unstable and the protagonists' journeys into these interior worlds represent a form of live burial from which they may never return.

Many authors of Antarctic adventure texts present these chthonic spaces as underworlds, and the journeys of the protagonists take the form of katabatic journeys. In *Uncharted Depths: Descent Narratives in English and French Children's Literature* (2010), Kiera Vaclavik explores the katabatic journey. She draws on Raymond J. Clark's definition of katabasis as "a Journey of the Dead made by a living person in the flesh who returns to our world to tell the tale" (Clark as cited in Vaclavik, 2010, p.2), but argues that katabatic narratives are not only journeys into the world of the dead, noting that the descent can involve chthonic locales, or can be internal psychological journeys (2010, p.2-3). Vaclavik notes that in children's katabatic literature, unlike classical katabatic narratives, the underground landscapes "are not hell", and that in the texts she examines, "None of the undergrounds

constitutes the final destination of all living beings or of all sinners in the afterlife" (2010, p.46). Like the texts that Vaclavik analyses, the Antarctic adventures narratives do not represent a descent into the world of the dead, but instead they explore descent into the physical landscape of the Antarctic. As Leane notes, the Antarctic has been represented as a kind of underworld clinging "spider-like" to the bottom of the world (2012, p.55), meaning that journeys to the Antarctic are often positioned as a form of descent. Adventure narratives take the descent further, delving into the chthonic spaces of the Antarctic, the caves, tunnels, crevasses. Like the heroes of classical katabatic narratives, the protagonists of Antarctic adventure narratives must complete quests, often securing treasure or other rewards from the underworld, before they are allowed to return.

In Mackie's *The Great Antarctic* (1913), two of the protagonists, Laird and Otto, find themselves stranded in the Antarctic and seek shelter in a series of caves near the Antarctic volcano, Mount Erebus. The cave provides a much-needed refuge for the men, and is kept unusually warm by hot air and water rising from the Antarctic volcano. However, when they attempt to venture further into the underground passage they discover chthonic space's deadly potential:

> If the passage should become narrower by only a few inches, then it would be all up with him. And what a death! – to be suffocated like a rodent in some dingy basement with all the holes blocked and the poisonous fumes being steadily forced into it by the destroyer! He felt as if his head was bursting. His strength seemed to have given out all of a sudden. A stupor was stealing over him. (1913, p.146-147)

The description of a stupor "stealing" over Laird creates the impression of an invisible enemy, whom Mackie calls "the destroyer" attacking the men. Without the ability to see or understand, they are largely powerless and it seems certain that they will be buried alive.

When they eventually escape from the cave, they find it has led not further into the interior but back out onto the surface, this time the crater of the volcano: “They stood in the crater of Mount Erebus […] It would take the pen of a Dante or the pencil of a Doré to describe the vastness and sombre majesty of such a scene” (Mackie, 1913: 151). The reference here to “the pencil of a Doré” alludes to Gustave Doré, a prominent illustrator who, in 1861, produced an illustrated version of Dante’s *Inferno*. Mackie here draws on the text and images in Dante’s *Inferno*, a classic katabatic text, to position the Antarctic underworld as a hellish space. Mackie describes the lava that fills Mt Erebus as, “a living death” (1913, p.265). In Mackie’s text, the Antarctic is hellish inside and out. The frozen external landscape promises an icy death, while the internal spaces offer fiery death or live burial. Only by escaping from the continent altogether can the protagonists truly be safe.

The chthonic spaces in Crisp’s *The Ice Divers* come in the form of a series of undersea tunnels that lead to a large hidden cave that conceals the wreck of the *Shagerrak*. Crisp encourages the reader to understand the caves as uncanny spaces, describing the cave as, “a heart-quaking place where freezing breezes whined and moaned like tortured phantoms, a place of such loneliness and isolation it did not seem as though it should exist outside a nightmare!” (1960, p.73). The reference to “tortured phantoms” implies a ghostly presence, but it is not a ghost but a madman that Dirk and Jim meet in the underground cave, instead they discover Captain Varstein. The Captain has lived in the wreck of the *Shagerrak* for years, existing between life and death, unable to return to the world of the living, but unable to pass over to the world of the dead. Instead, he stands guard over his treasure, murdering those who come near. The concealed nature of the chthonic cave has enabled Captain Varstein to remain undiscovered, and to continue his murderous rampage. It is only by undertaking a katabatic journey and exposing the hidden Antarctic underworld, that the

protagonists can complete their quest and overcome the "sinister" forces that had rendered the landscape uncanny for all those who entered.

Christopher Beck's *People of the Chasm* (1923) and Captain J.E. Gurdon's *The Secret of the South* (1950) are both fantasy adventure stories that draw on Antarctic gothic fantasy texts such as Poe's *Pym* and Jules Verne's *An Antarctic Mystery* (1897) which acts as a sequel to Poe's text and further develops the concept of hidden worlds within the Antarctic. Beck and Gurdon are centrally concerned with chthonic spaces, and the majority of their narratives take place in hidden worlds under the Antarctic ice. There are prolonged descriptions of descents into tunnels and chasms, and the encounters with the uncanny that occur in the underworld. The societies that the protagonists discover under the Antarctic ice are uncanny because they are familiar but strange. The humanoid populations seem to mirror familiar human societies but they have inhuman abilities or strength. The protagonists of these texts are in constant danger, and struggle to understand whom they can trust in these underground worlds.

The two protagonists of Christopher Beck's *People of the Chasm*, Monty and Dick, are chased by a "snow tornado" which "had the appearance of being possessed of some uncanny intelligence" into an unending crevasse deep inside the Antarctic (1923, p.107). Beck describes the descent, writing: "Monty was conscious of depths beyond imagination, of a monstrous cliff going down – down interminably, of a chasm which apparently had no bottom" (p.107). Once inside the chasm, the men discover two warring groups: the "feather folk" and the "ape folk". The "feather folk" are recognisably human; their dress is unusual but their way of life, and many of their habits are familiar. The "ape folk" first appear to be animals but their behaviour seems human: "It was an uncanny sight, for they came in regular order as though under the direction of superior officers" (p.126). Their experience of the "creatures" as uncanny is located in the men's inability to understand whether they are human

or animal, in the blurring of the boundaries between categories of beings. The protagonists feel that they should protect the "feather people" and therefore they categorise the "ape folk" as monsters or animals whom they feel free to attack. But in the designation of the "ape folk" as "folk", Monty and Dick display their uncertainty about the nature of the "ape" people and recognise their potential status as human, which would render their later actions as murderous.

The two protagonists find many other monstrous creatures that are both familiar and strange in the chthonic world of the Antarctic. They encounter animals that are common in Britain, but that have been enlarged and distorted to monstrous proportions, such as centipedes 50 feet long and enormous octopi. Beck describes the centipede as standing "about a yard high":

> its body was thicker than that of the largest snake. Its head alone was as large as a man's body, and from it stuck out what at first appeared to be long horns, but as it came nearer they saw that these were great antennae or feelers which waved to and fro in a peculiarly terrifying fashion. Worst of all were its eyes – great expressionless discs of a pale amber, looking as if made of dull glass. (p.137)

The focus on "dull", "expressionless" eyes, fosters uncertainty about the sentience of the creature. Freud's understanding of the uncanny is particularly preoccupied with sight and eyes, which he connects to castration anxiety. This enormous phallic creature, threatening to consume the men, with eyes that mask cognisance, is so thoroughly uncanny that it seems likely that Beck is attempting to create a disturbing effect. In fact, he repeats the word "uncanny" throughout the text, in order to create an Antarctic underworld defined by the unease, horror, and uncertainty upon which the uncanny is based.

In Gurdon's *Secret of the South*, Roddy and Kurt, the two young male protagonists, discover hidden tunnels under the Antarctic ice, and travel through the tunnels hoping to

recover crewmembers who have mysteriously disappeared. Roddy and Kurt's katabatic journey is part of a rite of passage that helps them achieve adult status. As the boys depart, they acknowledge that they may never return and they surmise that they have unwittingly "trespassed close to the Secret of the South" (1950, p.8). This text suggests that there are ancient and dangerous secrets hidden under the Antarctic ice that can be accessed through openings such as the tunnels or chasms in the ice. As they follow their leader into the opening of the tunnel they worry that the Skipper has been driven to insanity by stress and grief. They, too, are grieved and confused by the loss of their colleagues and the mysterious deaths of the dogs, but they cannot yet share the Skipper's certainty that there is a supernatural cause to the events. These opening sections are the most truly uncanny in the text, and they play out in the maze of tunnels leading from the boys' camp into the unknown spaces below. As they enter the tunnel, they gaze at the path ahead of them: "The floor of the passage was smooth, flat, and vaguely suggested sliminess" (p.22). In the dark their vision is obscured, and they can only "vaguely" understand their surroundings, which seem strange and repellent. Their misgivings increase as they make their descent; their sledge "seemed to have come to life and changed into a devil possessed of devils" (p.36). The Antarctic underworld seems to have the ability to transform inanimate objects, conferring upon them a sinister agency. In the opening section of the narrative Gurdon creates a disturbing depiction of the Antarctic, which prompts feelings of the uncanny for his protagonists which readers are encouraged to share. Gurdon specifically references the uncanny and the deep unease felt by the boys in the chthonic landscape:

> there also flashed an uncanny impression that, in spite of the apparent deadness of the place, he was not really alone with only one companion and two dogs. […] Suddenly he shivered, and was glad when Roddy spoke, although he knew from

> the words, and the manner of their utterance, that the same highly uncomfortable feeling was troubling his friend's mind. (p.47)

Again, the suspicion of a malevolent supernatural presence perturbs Roddy and Kurt. Gurdon continues to introduce uncertainty that confuses both the protagonists and the reader. The boys hear a shrieking cry, but struggle to place the sound as human or animal:

> An ordinary man could never have uttered such a sound, nor could any known animal; yet in it and through it, there rang subtle tones which suggested both the human and the beast, while its volume proved the pack and its menace spoke of hunting. (p.62)

Gurdon creates uncertainty about categories in this text: categories of the real or the supernatural, the human or the animal, death and life, good and evil are all confused and disordered so that the reader and the protagonists continuously struggle to get to grips with events, peoples, and the 'right' course of action.

Gurdon continues to provoke uncertainty throughout the text. The boys come across two warring humanoid factions, the first, the Anthropians, resemble apes but when Roddy and Kurt encounter an Anthropian in person they realise, "its movements were unlike the movements of any ape, and horribly suggested some non-human thing that was making a mock of man" (p.63), the second group (Polarians) appear "typically European" (p.64). A reader who is familiar with the genre of Antarctic fantasy and who had read texts such as Beck's might begin to understand the dynamics that the author seems to be establishing. Yet, at each turn, Gurdon undermines the reader's (and generic) expectations. When the Anthropians take the boys to their dwelling place, they offer Roddy and Kurt a sticky red liquid served from a human skull. The early impression is of a barbaric civilization, but these people are later revealed to be highly intelligent with complex social systems. The Polarians at first seem to be the unfortunate victims of Anthropian violence (much like the "feather

folk" in Beck's text); however, we later find that these people are brutal and malevolent. The Polarians have committed atrocities against the Anthropians, and they follow a deranged leader, the "Grand Polarian". Even as Gurdon subverts readers' initial expectations, he simultaneously raises further doubts about who is good and who is evil, drawing an increasingly complex picture of the Antarctic underworld.

Much of the uncertainty centres on the female Anthropian leader "the Duchess" who initially appears weak and in need of the boys' assistance, but who later emerges as the most powerful figure in the text with the ability to control her followers through telekinesis. At the end of the text, as the boys sail off towards battle they realise that they have been manipulated into engaging in a conflict which will very likely end in their deaths:

> our interesting hostess already knows as much as we do about the whole situation. If, in fact, we could look into her mind we would probably discover that she's been planning all along to make use of us to lead her people against their old enemies. It was with that object, Tony, that she had you set up as a sort of tribal god after her patrol brought you in. (p.201)

The Anthropians have treated Tony and the others as gods, creating a false sense of security and encouraging the boys to take on the role of saviours. They realise too late that they have been outwitted by the very people whom they considered primitive and barbaric. This episode is reminiscent of Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), wherein the protagonists are similarly perceived as gods. Brian Street notes that Haggard's protagonists "take advantage of an eclipse to reinforce the natives' belief that they are gods" (Street, 2016, p.61). Street argues that while some of Haggard's characters appear sceptical of the British adventurers' claims, "the final impression is not of a considerable degree of scepticism among the natives but of their gullibility, superstition and stupidity" (p.62). Gurdon references these tropes in order to subvert them; Gurdon depicts a native population that has deceived the British

intruders by allowing them to play out the stereotypical white saviour role in order to convince them to undertake a dangerous conflict, therefore sparing the Anthropian peoples direct conflict with the Polarians.

Beck depicts humanoid societies within the Antarctic that are inferior to the British society of the protagonists. Gurdon's text, in contrast, presents two humanoid cultures that are both (in different ways) significantly more advanced than that of the British invaders. In addition, the boys and the reader leave the underground world without ever fully comprehending the people or the history of the space they have found. The chthonic spaces of the Antarctic are persistently uncanny, as are the peoples who inhabit these hidden worlds.

In all of the adventure texts, chthonic spaces are characterised by their ability to secrete. Secrete is a word which, like uncanny, simultaneously holds opposing meanings. To secrete means to "conceal" or "hide", but it can also mean to "produce" or "discharge" ("Secrete," 2001, p.1165). The uncanny is concerned with that which has been hidden but which has come to light (Royle, 2003, p.2). The secreting power of the Antarctic in these texts reflects this uncanny sense of something hidden that re-emerges. Chthonic spaces in the Antarctic hide treasure but also 'discharge' it, they open up to consume characters, but also provide them with routes back to the surface. It is here that we find another marked difference between the "Heroic Era" exploration literature and the fictional adventure stories. Chthonic spaces in exploration literature are solely negative; consuming and hiding lost ships, animals and even explorers. Acts of consumption are irrevocable: as Paul Dowswell notes in his text for children about Shackleton's *Endurance*, "what the ice gets, the ice keeps" (2002, p.80). Shackleton cannot retrieve his damaged ship, Oates's body cannot be recovered from the ice, and the horses and dogs that fall down endless chasms are immediately considered lost. In contrast, in the adventure texts there is the potential for liberation. If the protagonists can solve the mystery or secure the treasure, they can escape from the icy grip of the Antarctic.

They can re-emerge from the dark depths of chasms or discover that their subterranean tunnels eventually lead back out to the light. It is still a threatening landscape, but the potential for confronting and defeating the threat is greatly increased. In the stories of both Scott and Shackleton, victory is qualified as, first, the retention of moral character in the face of certain death, and then, the ability to survive despite overwhelming odds of death. In the adventure fiction, the protagonists find their victories in the landscape in formats that are more traditional, through saving others, discovering treasures, or bravely defeating barbaric enemies.

The focus on chthonic spaces in fictional adventure literature can also be seen to reflect a preoccupation with the hidden history of the Antarctic landscape. Carroll notes the frequent appearance of chthonic spaces within canonical children's texts by authors including Susan Cooper, J.R.R. Tolkien, Alan Garner, and David Almond. Carroll argues that in these texts,

> culture arises from the earth, is deeply tied to the earth and whenever characters have to connect to a sense of the deep cultural past, they must first come into contact with a chthonic space. Caves, graves and mines do not simply conjure a sense of the past, like archaeological artefacts or genealogical inheritance; they allow characters to enter into and participate in the spaces of the past. (2011, p.148)

"Caves graves, and mines" are reminders of our buried past which connect us to a deeply human understanding of the world around us and of the functioning of time. We understand time in relation to human life, the generations that went before, and the linear progression of time as we age. The ruin connects us to an apparently endless pattern of birth and death that can be reassuring as it seems to offer structure and meaning. Ruins tell us that we are part of a long tradition; that others before us have lived, loved, built, and lost in the very space in which we stand. We lose these structuring forces in the Antarctic. The human-less history of

the landscape enacts an attack on our understanding of our world and our importance in this space. While in places such as Britain "culture arises from the earth", in the Antarctic, the earth is essentially distinct from human culture. This feeds into the sense of an eerie hidden past within the continent, which when combined with the deadly recent past creates an essentially uncanny landscape in these children's texts. I argue that the focus on finding and exposing chthonic spaces in Antarctic literature represents human disquiet at the inaccessibility of the history of the Antarctic. The narratives take diverse approaches to examining the uncanny potential of the landscape and confronting the lack of a human history in the space. In fantasy adventure texts such as Beck's *People of the Chasm* and Gurdon's *The Secret of the South,* human (or humanoid) civilisations are imported deep into the Antarctic. The more conventional adventure texts focus on drilling or mining the landscape to force it to display that which it has been hiding.

Chthonic Treasures

Many protagonists in Antarctic adventure narratives seek treasure within the chthonic spaces of the continent. These treasures are nearly always substances derived from the landscape itself such as coal, oil, or precious metals including gold and platinum. The ability to mine the landscape in this way, to force it to display its hidden depths, is depicted as a victory over the space. Man's ingenuity has defeated nature's power. In *People of the Chasm*, the treasure that is wrested from the space is oil and diamonds. The treasure here is a just reward for the 'heroic' actions of the two brothers who have fought monsters and destroyed one civilisation in order to save another. Margery Hourihan argues that many children's heroic adventure narratives celebrated imperialism by creating scenarios like the one played out in *People of the Chasm*, wherein white European heroes intervene in cultural conflicts, demonstrating their own superiority in the process. Speaking specifically about Ballantyne's *The Dog*

Crusoe and his Master (1860) Hourihan writes, "The actual history of white expansion is ignored and replaced with a flattering myth" (Hourihan, 1997, p.58). While the setting of Beck's text in an underground Antarctic world may be somewhat unusual for a children's adventure text, the story echoes earlier nineteenth century adventure stories in Beck's depiction of native peoples as inferior and inherently violent, while celebrating the physical and intellectual superiority of the white British heroes, whose financial reward at the end of the novel is depicted as a just reward for the peace they have achieved through their violence.

In Douglas Duff's *Treasure of the Antarctic* (1948) the treasure is "the greatest vein of pitchblende ever found on earth" (p.13). This material promises life and a victory over the slow death of cancer, but in seeking to exploit the material the protagonists must also risk death themselves. They are attacked by shadowy figures, endure mutiny and risk shipwreck in their attempts to secure the treasure. Their impediments also include Antarctic animals which are described as "monsters", with one appearing like "a queer version of a land-elephant" (p.119). Duff's Antarctic is a world that is familiar yet strange where animals that are often benign in Britain are reconfigured as monstrous and potentially deadly.

The treasure referenced in the title of J.F.C. Westerman's *The Antarctic Treasure* 1932, is platinum. From the very moment the crew set out on their journey, they are threatened by unseen forces. The protagonist, Dick, and the crew must repeatedly defeat antagonistic forces in order to secure the treasure, which they eventually retrieve through mining in the Antarctic mountains. Westerman positions their success as a victory, not just for the crew, but for Britain, which has been engaged in a diplomatic dispute over the ownership of the mining area: "During our absence from England, the British Government gained undisputed possession of the territory in which we were operating, and the syndicate immediately obtained the necessary concession. A company was then formed without delay" (1932,

p.230). Dick's team have not only secured the treasure they take home but they have also ensured that any future treasures recovered from the landscape will belong to Britain.

Later texts display significant changes in attitudes towards mining chthonic treasures. Crisps's *The Ice Divers* (1960) contains a warning about the dangers of chthonic treasures. Dirk and his companions discover "crude oil" that "was flowing like treacle down an ice channel, draining slowly but constantly into the valley bottom, freezing, thawing and spreading with the fluctuation of the air temperature, a rising flood of black gold!" (1960, p.102). There is obvious financial potential in this hidden treasure, but it has also been the cause of Captain Varstein's ruin. Like that other chthonic monster, a dragon, he has sought to hoard and protect his treasures, but it has cost him his son and his sanity. Dirk and his colleagues do not take any of the treasures that they discover with them, however it is implied that others will exploit them. Dirk declares: "I think it's only a matter of time before oil tankers will be lying in Heidel Bay" (p.126). This text reflects changing attitudes and can be seen as a sort of bridge between the celebratory imperialist attitudes within earlier Antarctic fiction, and the anti-exploitative sentiments of later Antarctic literature.

Margaret Andrew's *Flight to Antarctica* (1985) explicitly links the human greed for the earth's treasures with the downfall of the Antarctic landscape. The text follows two children, Emma aged 12, and her cousin David aged 10, who find themselves cast into a deep sleep and involuntarily transported to the Antarctic:

> She was about to speak when a pinkish mist came close. As Emma closed her eyes again she heard the cry of one gull then she knew no more. […] David was aware of bright circles of colour swirling towards him from the mist. They came in spinning circles then dissolved before reaching him. He wished it would stop. (p.9-10)

Their uncanny experience is heightened when they realise they have awakened in a world peopled by aliens and wicked dwarfs who kidnap David and transport him to their chthonic lair deep within the Antarctic. However, while the dwarfs are a malevolent force who threaten the children, the people who have brought them to the Antarctic, are benevolent. The alien race who transport the two children to the Antarctic tell them:

> this continent Gondwana, or Antarctica as you call it, was not always covered by snow and ice. It was part of a very great continent with very many islands off shore. Unfortunately people who lived here became greedy for things they couldn't own so they were punished. The continent split up over a vast number of years and this part pushed to the southernmost ends of the Earth. And here it must remain until those on your planet understand the good of all. (p.109)

The children learn that the Antarctic used to be "quite a hot place in fact, where lovely flowers and trees grew and bountiful rivers flowed to the sea" (p.18). The 'fall' of the Antarctic, it is implied, could happen to other spaces, such as the children's home landscape of England. Greed for hidden chthonic treasures is blamed for the loss of this idyllic landscape and the harsh conditions that now dominate the continent:

> The love of precious stones lies deep within the hearts of men, for the colour of stones lasts forever, whereas most other colours fade. Remember this children, and bear it well – precious stones were placed on Earth to help man, not cause trouble. This has been sadly forgotten. Men see them as something to own when they cannot be owned, and as something to sell when they should not be sold. You have seen the greed of Troon. He will learn his lesson in time. (p.104)

The children are encouraged to become advocates for the landscape and to reject greed and the desire to exploit the natural world. However, while Andrew denounces greed and encourages a love of the natural world, her text can still be seen to be ecophobic, as she

presents icy landscapes as a form of punishment enacted on the world, and celebrates only conventionally beautiful or pastoral landscapes.

Margaret Mahy's *Riddle of the Frozen Phantom* (2001) contains a similar condemnation of human greed. The primary antagonist in this text is the greedy Rancid Swarthy whose name itself suggests that he has 'gone bad'. Rancid wants to exploit the hidden treasures of the Antarctic. He plans to use violent means to achieve his ends and he carries bombs and explosives to expose the hidden spaces in the Antarctic and to bury his victims within the space. Rancid is motivated by greed and a psychopathic disregard for human life. The protagonists, the Sapwood family, are the antithesis of everything Rancid represents. Just as Rancid's name is indicative of his character, the Sapwood name is also imbued with meaning. 'Sapwood' is located between the heartwood and bark of a tree, it is the soft, newly formed layer of wood, as part of the tree's growth process sapwood hardens and is converted to heartwood (Mauseth, 2014, p.184). The name reflects the family's connection to nature, and the growth that all of the family experience during the narrative. The youngest son, Hotspur, is described as particularly connected to nature, and has the ability to communicate with animals. The Sapwoods try to protect the Antarctic from Rancid and his colleagues, and to help the ghost to seek justice and move on, removing an uncanny presence from the landscape. They represent harmony with nature and are a counteractive force to the greed exhibited by Rancid, who is punished by the ghost at the climax of the narrative. In these later texts, chthonic treasures are like moral tests, they are objects of temptation, but only through rejecting this treasure can the protagonists emerge victorious. These later texts do not position their characters in a combative relationship with the landscape, instead the child characters appear as protectors of the space.

Time and Transformation in Antarctic Adventure Narratives

The cyclical "Heroic Era" chronotope, with its focus on rebirth and repetition, reappears in the adventure narratives: missing sailors and explorers reappear, ships re-emerge from hidden caves and chasms, and death is temporary as the dead return as ghosts who haunt the landscape. The temporal boundaries between the past and the present are broken down in these narratives so that the past exists simultaneously with the present. In Antarctic adventure literature, the present is always defined by the events of the past – by shipwrecks, mutiny, and murder, and these past events shape the future of the protagonists. While in "Heroic Era" narratives, the cyclical pattern is presented as part of an enduring legacy of the explorers in the landscape, here the uncanny potential of this kind of return is foregrounded. The dead who return do not emerge from the ice unscathed, instead, like Captain Cathcardo, they are uncanny doubles of their past selves, with new and deadly abilities, or they are figures who have avoided death but succumbed to madness.

While the adventure narratives retain the cyclicality of the "Heroic Era" chronotope, the impact of time upon the protagonists in these texts is fundamentally different. The "Heroic Era" chronotope involves heroic protagonists who arrive in the landscape fully formed. Their time in the Antarctic is an opportunity to display their inherent heroic qualities, and the inability of the space to change the heroes is an important part of their supposed victory over the space. In contrast, as in whaling literature, adventure literature represents the Antarctic as a transformative wilderness, to which young protagonists (primarily boys) go in order to endure hardships and prove themselves worthy of admission into the world of adulthood.

Many of the early Antarctic adventure stories for children position the Antarctic landscape as a space in which child characters can transition to adulthood. In *The Great Antarctic* John Carton (the primary mentor figure in the text), tells the young protagonist Jack: "The average English public school boy is about the most helpless creature under the

sun" (Mackie, 1913, p.41). In this text, children are "helpless creatures" who need guidance in order to develop into productive adults. It is through encounters with the uncanny that the young male protagonists are able to transition, from helpless to helpful, from boys to men. In Duff's *Treasure of the Antarctic*, Captain Samways tells his sons: "It's certainly high time we saw about your careers" (1948, p.15). The boys and their father explicitly envision their trip to the Antarctic as a rite of passage that will enable them to enter the adult world. Together they confront the possibility of death on several occasions, and they help secure treasure and overcome foes. In coming face to face with the uncanny, and entering uncanny spaces to reveal the hidden secrets of the Antarctic the boys are able to develop and grow. While other texts are more ambiguous about the benefits of growth, here the boys are explicitly rewarded for their bravery by an admiral who remarks: "'I listened to what both of you boys have done […] and it seems to me that the mutineers were beaten because of what you did'" (Duff, 1948, p.83). The admiral promises the boys appointments in the Royal Navy, signifying their entry into the adult world.

There is a considerable shift in terms of the transformative effect of time spent in the Antarctic in texts written for children in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Later texts still depict the Antarctic as a transformative space, but there is no transition to adulthood. Children learn and grow, but they do so while remaining resolutely childlike. In Andrew's *Flight to Antarctica*, the children are brought to the Antarctic to initiate a positive transformation. Emma and David are representative of a generation of children who hold the potential for change and can avoid repeating the mistakes of previous generations. The children have been specifically chosen because (it is implied) they are not yet possessed by the greed and selfishness of adults and so can be trusted with the secrets which they discover during their time in the Antarctic. Margaret Mahy's *Riddle of the Frozen Phantom* also depicts child characters who are closely connected to the Antarctic landscape, and who grow

and change as a result of their time in the Antarctic, without transitioning into adults. In Mahy's text the children have a profound effect on the landscape during their time there, as Sophie awakens the ghost who becomes a force for good in the landscape, and the family solve the murder of the Captain, thus releasing an uncanny presence from the landscape. The Antarctic, particularly the ghost Captain, also has a beneficial transformative effect on the Sapwood children and their wider family. The positive impact of time in the landscape is most overt in the character of Hotspur, the youngest of the child characters in the text. At the beginning of the text he does not communicate verbally with humans, only animals, which isolates him from his family and leads other people to question his intelligence. At the end of the narrative, having met with the ghost of Captain Cathcardo, explored the chthonic cave where the shipwreck is buried, and come face-to-face with evil in the form of Rancid Swarthy, Hotspur finally speaks for the very first time:

> And suddenly an entirely new voice chimed in – a voice that no one had ever heard clearly before. 'Wonderful world!' it said.
>
> 'Hotspur!' screamed Sophie. 'Hotspur said something!'
>
> 'Wonderful!' repeated Hotspur, beaming around at everyone, thrilled by his own cleverness. (Mahy, 2001: 178)

Hotspur's first speech act, uttering the words "wonderful world", reinforce his established connection to nature, but do so in a way that connects him with his family, through the use of verbal language. He has changed but he remains the same.

Time within the unique space of the Antarctic is transformative for all of the child characters who encounter the continent's uncanny forces and figures. Mahy and Andrew's texts are notable because this transformation does not take the form of a coming-of-age. In *Riddle of the Frozen Phantom* and *Flight to Antarctica,* the child protagonists engage with and thrive in the space *as children*. Unlike the protagonists in other adventure narratives they

have not moved on to a new temporal period in their lives; they remain children, but their understanding of the world, and of their relationships, has been affected by their encounters with the uncanny during their time in the Antarctic. Importantly, both of these texts imply that the status of the protagonists as children enables them to understand situations and learn from their experiences in a way that the adult characters cannot.

Vaclavik notes that "In many works for young readers, katabasis remains a decidedly male prerogative" (2010, p.72). The other genres into which these adventure texts fit (adventure literature and Antarctic literature for children), reflect the same gender bias towards male protagonists. It is notable, then, that both Andrew and Mahy's texts contain female and male children. These authors suggest that Antarctica is a space in which children can learn and develop regardless of gender. Given the overwhelmingly male cast of the majority of Antarctic texts for children, these narratives stand out as texts that contain female characters who are not dependent on, or subject to the will of, the male characters. The female protagonists are represented as individuals who engage in adventures and are required to use physical and cognitive powers to evade potentially dangerous situations. Due to the scarcity of female characters in Antarctic literature for children, these texts stand out as progressive.

Conclusion

David Rudd has argued that there are "few works in children's literature that effectively create uncanny effects, disrupting our symbolic coordinates" (2013, p.117). Rudd highlights a small number of children's texts such as Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and Hoffman's *Struwwelpeter* (1845) as texts that, in his estimation, achieve "the more troubling and disturbing shifts out of familiarity" which characterise the uncanny (2013, p.129). Rudd maintains that the uncanny is: "a fitting term to reserve for the more troubling and disturbing shifts out of familiarity that we witness in what, so far, are a few exceptional

texts of children's literature" and concludes, "I am therefore in agreement with Coats, who sees the uncanny as 'precisely what is excluded from children's literature" (2013, p.129). The prevalence of the uncanny within Antarctic adventure literature for children presents a challenge to Rudd's claims of exceptionalism. These texts firmly locate the Antarctic within the known and familiar world, and then proceed to render this world – our world – uncanny. Locating the uncanny in a place as distant and difficult to access as the Antarctic, could be seen to lessen the immediacy of the fears that such uncanny forces would provoke. Conversely, it also ensures that any uncertainty or doubts raised by the texts cannot be overcome or disproven through lived experience in the landscape, as the vast majority of children will never visit the Antarctic. Instead, the adventure stories written about the continent stoke the perception of the continent as an essentially uncanny and hostile landscape.

One text in particular achieves the truly disturbing uncanny effect that Rudd restricts to a handful of texts. Throughout Gurdon's *Secret of the South*, the reader discovers the unsettling secrets of the subterranean world. Gurdon's text echoes other Antarctic gothic literature such as Poe's *Pym*, as well as science fiction fantasy such as H.P. Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) and Beck's *People of the Chasm* (1923). A key part of this text's ability to achieve an uncanny effect is through the manipulation of existing generic patterns and tropes. Many of the texts examined here contain intertextual references connecting them to wider Antarctic gothic or fantasy writing, however, Gurdon uses this intertextuality and an awareness of established patterns in order to build and then subvert expectations. It is a sophisticated and complex piece of children's literature and one which arguably deserves greater critical attention than it has received to date.

The enduring focus on the uncanny within adventure literature set in the Antarctic reflects a persistent ambivalence towards the Antarctic landscape. Even in texts, such as

Andrew's *Flight to Antarctica* or Mahy's *Riddle*, which focus on the need to protect the Antarctic environment, there still remains a preoccupation with hidden secrets, chthonic spaces, death and madness all rooted in the landscape. Through repeated themes of digging, mining and otherwise entering the hidden spaces of the Antarctic, the texts also explore our sense of alienation from the history of the Antarctic. Unable to read the landscape in relation to human history and culture, characters struggle to comprehend and accommodate the aeons of time that have unfolded in the Antarctic unseen and unrecorded. Maurice Merleau-Ponty argues that we do not experience space as "a network of relations between objects" but rather as something lived from the inside (1964, p.178). This perhaps explains our deep ambivalence about the Antarctic, a space that can be viewed, for the majority of people, only from the outside. Even our ability to perceive the space from the outside is obscured, as the unique environmental properties in the Antarctic cause the disturbances of visual fields and interferes with our fundamental ability to perceive or understand the space. Merleau-Ponty speaks of vision as enabling understanding, even a transcendental understanding, through vision "we come into contact with the sun and the stars, that we are everywhere all at once" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.187). Instead, in the Antarctic vision deceives, or is impeded. It is a landscape that seems to attack our ability to comprehend, and therefore control, space. Estok defines ecophobia as "representations of nature as an opponent that hurts, hinders, threatens, or kills us" (2009, p.209). The vast majority of Antarctic adventure stories depict the Antarctic as a threatening, hostile force, that contains terrifying figures and sites, and poses a serious threat to the lives of the protagonists. This is a genre which promotes an ecophobic understanding of the Antarctic landscape, and encourages readers to empathise with protagonists who fight to control or subdue the landscape. Even Andrew's *Flight to Antarctica* can be read as an ecophobic text, due to the negative portrayal of the Antarctic ice as a form of punishment. However, this text does criticise human greed and exploitation of nature, and shows a

growing cognizance of ecological issues in the Antarctic, and the need to protect this environment. Andrew's child protagonists learn important environmental lessons in the Antarctic, and are urged to implement this knowledge when they return home.

The child protagonists in Mahy's *Riddle of the Frozen Phantom* represent an ecophilic attitude towards nature, while her antagonist, Rancid Swarthy, seeks to exploit and pollute the landscape. The children's father, Bonniface, is an Antarctic explorer who loves the continent. He passes this love of the Antarctic on to his children, who revel in the chance to accompany him on an Antarctic expedition. Alison Waller notes Margaret Mahy's "fascination with remembering and forgetting" and her interest in "death or disappearance, and the subsequent complex memories those left behind have to endure" (2015, p.146). Waller looks specifically at Mahy's 1987 text, *Memory*, but the themes she identifies are equally evident in Mahy's *Riddle*. Like other Antarctic adventure narratives, this text is preoccupied with death and disappearance. Mahy uses these same uncanny tropes, but she utilises them for an alternative purpose, helping the child protagonist, and by extension, the child reader, to consider complex questions regarding death, life-after-death, and the impact of parental loss on family dynamics. The children's quest to discover the Captain's murderer and help him cross over into the next world is connected with their own grieving processes following the death of their mother. The Sapwoods' experiences in the Antarctic wilderness solidifies their family bond and helps them comprehend their own loss and look to the future. Mahy's text, published in 2001, can be seen as part of a wider trend in Antarctic literature, as authors begin to consider the landscape from an alternative, ecophilic perspective. One genre exemplifies this new ecophilic approach to the Antarctic: penguin picturebooks. These texts exchange human characters for feathered or four-legged protagonists, and leave behind established ecophobic tropes and themes, such as the depiction of the Antarctic as an uncanny space, to focus on the landscape's function as a home for its animal inhabitants.

Chapter Six: Picturing Penguins

In *The Worst Journey in the World* (1922), *Terra Nova* crew member Apsley Cherry-Garrard declared that "All the world loves a penguin" (2013, p.445). If the countless books written about penguins are anything to go by, then surely, he is right. Penguin stories are one of the newest, and most popular, genres of Antarctic literature for children. While there is a wide array of Antarctic animals for authors to choose from when writing for children – seals, sea-lions, petrels, and even albatrosses – it is the penguin that repeatedly appears as the animal protagonist in stories for young children. This is perhaps because, unlike other Antarctic animals, penguins have frequently been anthropomorphised in literary and visual representations.

Early explorers, such as Cherry-Garrard, took unique delight in their interactions with penguins; Cherry-Garrard called Antarctic penguins a "queer people" who, "are like ourselves, and in some respects what we should like to be" (2013, p.64, p.445), while Robert Scott in his *Discovery* expedition diaries described the crew watching "the antics of these queer inhabitants with absorbing interest" (2014, p.135). Stephen Martin argues that the penguin is discussed in anthropomorphic terms more than any other bird (2009, p.11). Martin cites, as an example, W. H Bickerton, a visitor to the sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island in 1895, who described his experiences in *Pall Mall Magazine*. Bickerton reflected: "Perhaps it is the impression of similarity which has led me to write about them more as if they were a nation of people than a mass of multitudinous birds" (as cited in Martin, 2009, p.8). While penguins have long been anthropomorphised, it is not just humans generally, but specifically children with whom they have been associated. As early as 1578 sailor John Winter described sighting a penguin colony on St Georges Island and asserted that "man would take them to be little children" (as cited in Martin, 2009, p.11). Despite this long-established connection between

children and penguins, it was not until the late twentieth-century that the penguin story for children became established within Antarctic children's literature.

In their analysis of the representation of penguins in films for adults and children, Elizabeth Leane and Stephanie Pfennigwerth note that 'The early twenty-first century saw the public profile of penguins rise to spectacular levels' (Leane & Pfennigwerth, 2011, p.29). They specifically reference films such as *March of the Penguins* (2005) and *Happy Feet* (2006) as examples of this phenomenon. They see this as part of a consistent pattern of growing interest in representations of penguins within literature and film. Antarctic children's literature reflects these wider trends, with penguin stories appearing as a popular genre in the 1990s and large numbers of texts published since the turn of the twenty-first century. This is the only major genre of Antarctic children's literature to emerge in the late twentieth-century, and the texts reflect contemporary changes in cultural perceptions of wilderness. As Roderick Nash has argued, where once wilderness landscapes were seen as wastelands, they now "enjoy widespread and growing popularity" (1982, p.xi). The shifting attitudes towards wilderness are reflected in the legislative changes within the Antarctic Treaty System, specifically the designation of the Antarctic as a "natural reserve, devoted to peace and science" ("Madrid Protocol", 1991) as part of the Madrid Protocol signed by members of the ATS in 1991. The Protocol was designed to protect the Antarctic environment through the prohibition of mining, and regulations regarding marine pollution, waste disposal, and protected areas. This legislation implicitly recognised the Antarctic landscape as a unique and vulnerable ecological site which needed to be protected through legislating human behaviour. The shift in cultural conceptions of the Antarctic is evident within the penguin stories. In contrast to the ecophobic descriptions of landscape which abound in whaling, 'Heroic Era,' and adventure literature, the penguin stories present an ecophilic view of the Antarctic.

This chapter analyses the genre of Antarctic penguin stories for children, analysing nine texts in detail. The plots of the penguin stories are more diverse that the majority of the other genres examined above. The texts include: stories of young penguins who become lost and must search for their friends/family (examples include Karma Wilson's *Where is Home, Little Pip?* (2008), and Petr Horáček's *The Lonely Penguin* (2011)); broadly factual stories of penguin family life such as Martin Jenkins's *The Emperors Egg* (1999); and stories which depart from realism such as Jeanne Willis's *Poles Apart* (2015) which features a penguin family who accidentally travel to the North Pole while on a picnic. There are also examples of overtly environmental texts such as Helen Cowcher's 1990 *Antarctica* and Jed Mercurio's *The Penguin Expedition* (2003), which offer radically different approaches in their attempts to convey an environmental message for young readers.

The chapter will explore how the choice of animal protagonists in Antarctic penguin stories enables a transformation from ecophobia to ecophilia, as stories are told from the perspective of indigenous Antarctic animals, for whom the Antarctic is a home space. This allows for the development of domestic themes revolving around the family, which are largely absent from other genres of Antarctic literature for children. The shift from ecophobia to ecophilia results in stories which are markedly different to other Antarctic texts for children; these differences range from the representation of gender to the way that these texts describe and visualise the Antarctic landscape. Perhaps the most obvious differentiating factor of the penguin story is format. The majority of penguin stories take the form of picturebooks. I begin by considering the visual nature of the texts, including how the picturebook format encourages the child reader to engage with the young penguin protagonists. Drawing on the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and Maria Nikolajeva, I examine the functioning of time in penguin stories, arguing that these stories depict a world which exists in what Nikolajeva calls "mythic" time. Drawing on the work of Alice Curry, I demonstrate

how these texts utilise "contracted" viewpoints to represent the lived experiences of Antarctic animals, with a emphasis on the function of the landscape as a home space. In contrast to the majority of Antarctic texts for children, the penguin stories frequently feature female characters and offer an alternative representation of gender dynamics within family units. This chapter evaluates the depiction of gender for young child readers, with a particular focus on the ecofeminist perspective in Karma Wilson's *Where is Home, Little Pip?* (2008) which is illustrated by British artist Jane Chapman. Finally, I discuss ecologically-engaged penguin picturebooks which subvert essential elements of the genre. These ecologically-focused texts position humans as a negative force in the landscape and encourage the child reader to consider the damage which humans do to animal habitats and the wider environment.

Penguins and the Picturebook Format

Penguin stories primarily take the form of visual texts, using illustrations to draw their readers into the world of the Antarctic. However, this is not the only genre to feature picturebooks or heavily illustrated texts. Michael McCurdy's *Trapped by the Ice!* (1997) and Jen Green's *Avoid Joining Shackleton's Polar Expedition* (2002), illustrated by David Antram, are both visual texts. However, the relationship between the visual and the verbal in these texts is markedly different than in the penguin picturebooks. "Heroic Era" picturebooks such as those by McCurdy and Green, take the form of what Nikolajeva and Scott call an "illustrated story" as "the pictures are subordinated to the words" (2006, p.8). In these texts, there is a large amount of written text on each page, and it is this verbal element which guides the reader through the story, to the extent that the story "can still be read without looking at the pictures" (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2006, p.8). In McCurdy's *Trapped by the Ice!* there are 84 words on the first page, in Jen Green's *Avoid Joining Shackleton's Polar Expedition* there are 216 words on the first page. In contrast, Helen Cowcher's penguin book *Antarctica* (1990)

contains 15 words on the first page, in Karma Wilson's *Where is Home, Little Pip?* (2008) there are 29 words on the first page and in Petr Horáček's *The Lonely Penguin* (2011) there are only 11 words across the first two pages. These are texts in which the visual element plays a key role, and the relationship of the image to the text is one of enhancement. David Lewis (2001) describes this format saying:

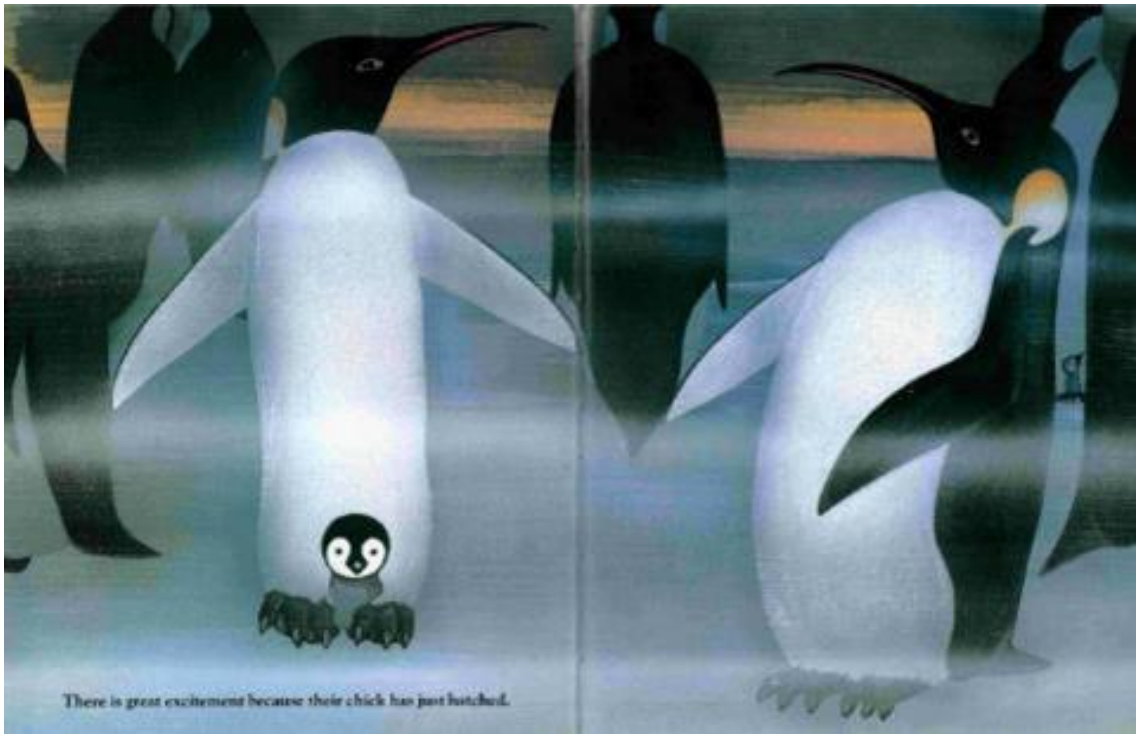
> The relationship between words and pictures becomes enhancing when the pictures expand upon the words or vice versa, the possibilities within this category ranging from minimal enhancement to significant enhancement or complementarity. In the former case (minimal enhancement) there is little difference between what the words say and what the pictures show, but in the latter case, one strand within the text will be seen to enlarge upon the other in ways which clearly affect the overall meaning. (2001, p.38)

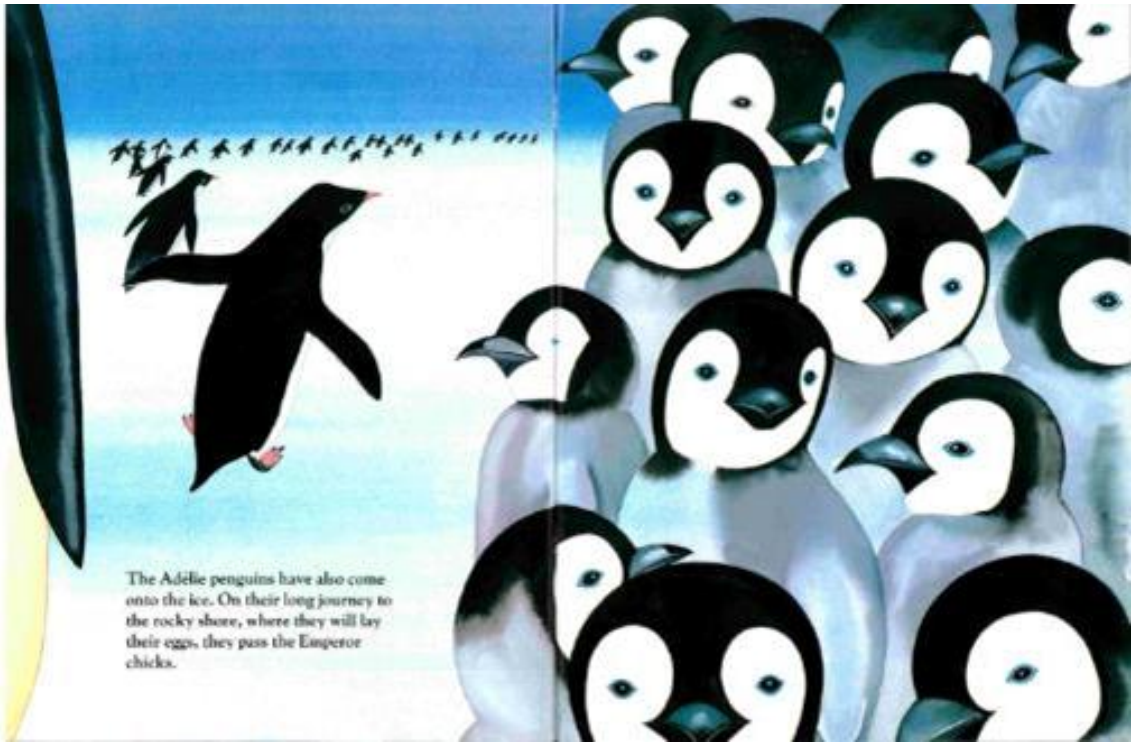
The penguin picturebooks examined in this chapter span this range from minimal to significant enhancement, but in every text the visual plays a key role, particularly in the depiction of the Antarctic landscape.

The majority of penguin picturebooks are aimed at younger readers. Karma Wilson's *Little Pip* books, *Where is Home, Little Pip*? (2008), *Don't Be Afraid, Little Pip* (2009) and *What's in the Egg, Little Pip?* (2012) are marketed for children 2 years and upwards. Petr Horáček's *The Lonely Penguin* (2011) and *Blue Penguin* (2015) are marketed for children 3 years and upwards, and Martin Jenkins *The Emperors' Egg* (1999) is marketed for children aged 4 or older.[15] The protagonists in the penguin picturebooks are similarly youthful. Texts such as Karma Wilson's *Where is Home, Little Pip?*, Martin Jenkin's *The Emperor's Egg* and Petr Horáček's *Blue Penguin* feature newly-hatched protagonists, and follow these young

[15] Information on age-banding was sourced from the publishers websites, Karma Wilson's *Little Pip* books are published by Simon & Schuster: http://www.simonandschuster.co.uk/books/Whats-in-the-Egg-Little-Pip/Jane-Chapman/9781471105050, Horáček's texts are published by Walker Books: http://www.walker.co.uk/Blue-Penguin-9781406358285.aspx, and Jenkin's *The Emperor's Egg* is also published by Walker Books: (http://www.walker.co.uk/The-Emperor-s-Egg-9781406366990.aspx). Accessed 08.03.2017.

penguins through the first days and weeks of their lives. If the characters are not new-born, then they are often identified as young penguin chicks. This opportunity for very young readers to see themselves reflected in Antarctic narratives is unusual within Antarctic children's literature. "Heroic Era" literature, the most enduring and one of the most popular genres of Antarctic fiction, explicitly excludes children from the narratives, despite the implied child reader. Other narratives, such as the whaling and adventure texts, often focus on boys who are undergoing the transition to adulthood, which complicates identification as the protagonists are simultaneously (and neither) child and adult. In contrast, the penguin stories actively attempt to build an emotional connection between the young protagonists and the child reader. This is primarily achieved through the visual elements of the text. In Helen Cowcher's *Antarctica* (1990) young animals consistently look directly out at the reader, as the adult characters look away. This is a clear creative choice which builds a connection between the reader and the youngest protagonists (Figures 8, 9 and 10 below).





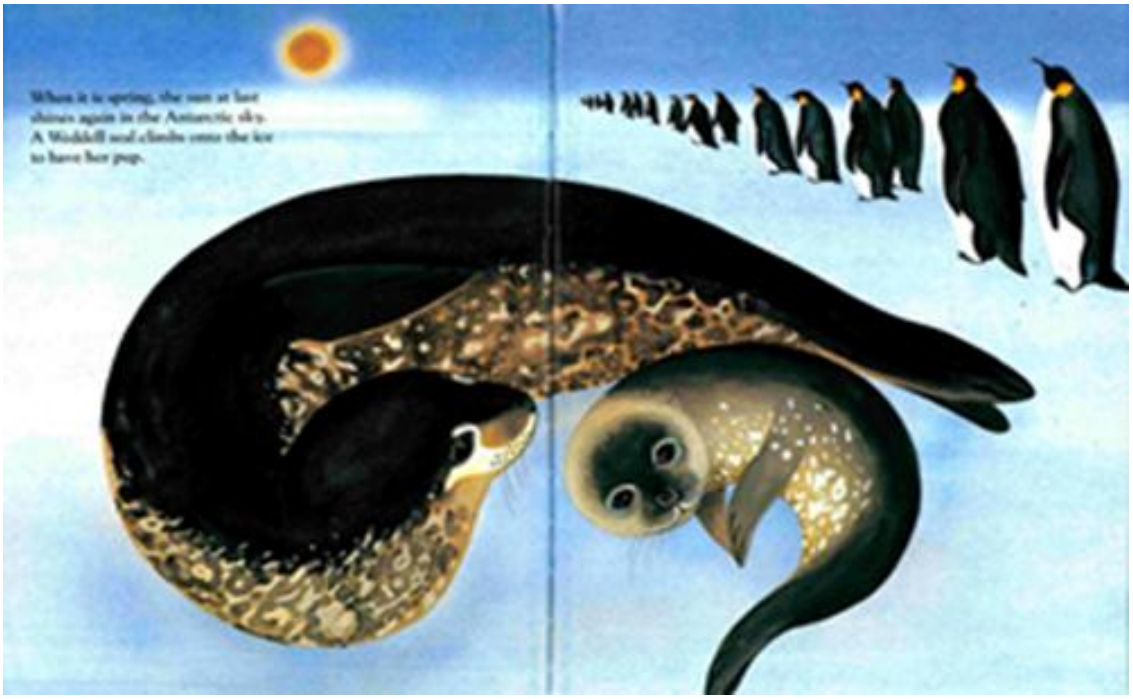


Figure 8, 9 and 10: Animal protagonists looking out at the reader in Cowcher's Antarctica, 1990, n.pag.

Similar illustrations are present in Jenkin's *The Emperor's Egg*, which depicts the new penguin chick staring directly out of the text. Many of the Antarctic penguin stories exploit the picturebook form to reinforce a connection between the reader and the young animal

characters. For some texts, such as Cowcher's *Antarctica*, this could be seen as part of a post-anthropocentric ethic in the narrative, as the child reader is asked to identify with the animal protagonist, and to understand subjectivity and agency as operating beyond the limits of the human world. For others, it is a way to draw the young reader into the text. The child readers of these stories are presented with protagonists whose experiences and problems are intended to mirror their own. Karma Wilson's three *Little Pip* books follow the young protagonist when she gets temporarily separated from her parents; when she is learning how to swim; and when she gets a little brother.[16] Unlike the "Heroic Era" genre, which contains adult characters whom the child reader is encouraged to admire and emulate, the characters and storylines in penguin narratives are ordinary and familiar, and encourage the reader to draw parallels with their own lives.

It is noteworthy that the genre of Antarctic literature in which young characters appear most frequently is also a genre about non-humans. This reflects an enduring cultural conception of the child as closely connected to nature. Throughout the history of children's literature the use of animal protagonists has been commonplace, from texts such as Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1901) and A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) to Richard Adams's *Watership Down* (1972). Children's literature is filled with anthropomorphised animal characters with whom child readers are encouraged to empathise. As Sidney Dobrin has noted, "children have been cast as green figures in both senses of the metaphor, both tied to nature and environment as well as considered innocent, ignorant, and inexperienced" (2011, p.15). This presumed connection to nature has resulted in "a deeply entrenched story tradition of using animal characters to teach human morals to children" (Rowe Fraustino, 2014, p.145), and the Antarctic penguin stories can be seen as part of this continuing tradition. These stories are not only set in the Antarctic, but are fundamentally

[16] Throughout this Chapter, I will use human pronouns such as 'who' and 'he/she' rather than which or 'it' when referring to the animal protagonists of the texts. This reflects the authors' depiction of the animal characters as individual experiencing subjects whose emotional journey is central to the narrative.

about the Antarctic, focusing on the inhabitants and the environments in which they live. Texts such as Jenkins's *The Emperors' Egg*, and Wilson's *Little Pip* books, feature young characters with whom the child reader can identify, and asks the child reader to invest in the fate of young animals such as those depicted in their stories. This implied connection between children and nature could, however, also be seen to be problematic as it situates the child as 'other'. Lisa Fraustino has examined the connection between the child and anthropomorphised animal characters within writing for children. She argues: "Anthropomorphized characters in children's literature occupy the same liminal space as children themselves […] Like liminal child characters, anthropomorphized characters are hybrid, in-between; they are not Real, not really animals […] and not really people, either" (2014, p.158). Within Antarctic literature this liminality is particularly pertinent because the Antarctic is a space from which children have been largely excluded. In the animal stories, children are invited to see themselves in the Antarctic through the inclusion of very young protagonists. However the fact that these protagonists are non-human means that human children remain excluded from the landscape[17].

Time in Penguin Picturebooks

Time in penguin narratives is focused on the cycles of life, particularly on moments of birth and renewal. These stories are not rooted in any specific period, and instead they could be set at any time in the history of the Antarctic. Many Antarctic penguin stories feature protagonists who are not unique but are representative of generations of animals who have come before them, and those who will come afterwards. The chronotope which dominates penguin stories

[17] The children who have inhabited the Antarctic, such as Emilio and Fernando whom I discussed in the Introduction, do not feature in British literature for children about the continent. Therefore, the lived-experience of child inhabitants of the Antarctic remains unexplored. Perhaps this is because the children live(d) on Argentinian or Chilean bases, and British authors do not want to engage with the geopolitics of the region, however it could also be seen to reflect a consistent desire to ignore or effect the presence of children in the Antarctic continent.

is what Maria Nikolajeva has called "mythic" time (2000, p.5). In describing "mythic time" Nikolajeva draws on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the 'idyllic model' and many elements of this model can be seen within the penguin stories.

Bakhtin asserts that, within the idyllic model, there exists a "special relationship" between time and space. This involves "an organic fastening-down, a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory with all its nooks and crannies, its familiar mountains, valleys, fields, rivers and forests, and one's own home" (1981, p.225). For Bakhtin, the idyll represents a "spatially limited world" in which "a sequence of generations is localized that is potentially without limit" (p.225), and the focus is on "life's basic realities" including "love, birth, death, marriage, labor, food and drink, [and] stages of growth" (p.225). While many of the features of the idyllic model are evident within penguin narratives, such as spatial specificity, Bakhtin's "third distinctive feature of the idyll" is perhaps the most pertinent. This third feature is: "the conjoining of human life with the life of nature, the unity of their rhythm, the common language used to describe phenomena of nature and the events of human life" (p.226). In animal stories, human emotions, human family constructs, and human problems are projected onto anthropomorphised animal protagonists. While there are varying degrees of anthropomorphisation in each text, they all tell stories which involve the conjoining of nature and the events of human life.

Writing specifically about children's literature, Nikolajeva notes a movement from "nonlinear time, typical of archaic or mythical thought, toward linearity, typical of contemporary mainstream literature" (2000, p.1). She cites the fairytale as exemplary of mythic time. Nikolajeva argues that a key differentiating factor between children's literature and adult literature is the use in children's texts of "iterative frequency" which she describes as "telling once about an event that has taken place several times or is taking place regularly" (p.8). Nikolajeva asserts that "the cyclical, repetitive character of events is the very essence of

traditional children's fiction" (p.10). Penguin picturebooks are a relatively recent genre of children's literature, however they draw on traditional frameworks, including mythic time. These stories tell the child reader about life as it is, as it has always been, and there is no indication in the majority of these texts that the established patterns of life in the Antarctic might be altered. Even Petr Horáček's *Blue Penguin*, which tells the story of a penguin who is born blue, and is therefore unique and notably different than his contemporaries, is still a story which fits this mythic chronotope. Rather than representing a penguin society that is fundamentally altered by the addition of a new and different individual, this book tells the story of a unique individual who is eventually taken into the heart of his own community, which disregards his differences and celebrates his sameness. Texts that operate in this chronotope include Martin Jenkin's *The Emperor's Egg*, Petr Horáček's *The Lonely Penguin*, and Karma Wilson's *Little Pip* books.

The Emperor's Egg follows a penguin family as they incubate their egg until the new chick is hatched. The protagonist of this story is the male penguin who is left to mind his unborn chick while his mate goes in search of food. None of the characters are named. There is no indication of the temporality of this story; it could be set in the year the text was published (1999), or a century before. These are processes that repeat and that are intimately connected with the seasons and the landscape in which the animals live. Horáček's *The Lonely Penguin* is similarly timeless. The reader can infer from the penguin's playful activities, and his lack of a mate or chicks, that the protagonist is a young penguin, but beyond this, there are no identifying features offered to the child reader. The simple story of the penguin's dismay to find himself alone and lost, and his joy when he locates his friends, draws no connections with any human history or specific periods. Like *The Emperor's Egg*, *Where is Home, Little Pip?* centres on birth. The story begins with the birth of the young protagonist on the pebbly shores of the Antarctic and is set within the first few weeks of her

life. As the young penguin searches for her parents, she encounters many other animals, all of them female and mothers. This focus on motherhood, birth and growth establishes the cyclical nature of time in the text. Unlike the previous two texts, however, *Where is Home* intersects with human time. Towards the end of the narrative, Pip comes across a team of dogs, who are pulling a human, wrapped up in modern cold-weather gear. This locates the story in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries, since the advent of land-based exploration on the continent, and the clothing implies that it is most likely the latter half of the twentieth century. Beyond this, the specific temporal period is unclear. Penguin stories which use mythic time look simultaneously forwards to the new generation represented in the texts, and backwards, as the cyclical chronotope situates these stories within a wider history of birth, and growth and death in the continent. The lack of temporal specificity within the genre is noteworthy as so many other Antarctic texts are fixed around very specific dates and events.

Nikolajeva connects mythic time to works in the utopian, Arcadian, or pastoral modes. She summarises the seven key features of these modes, noting "the importance of a particular setting", "the general sense of harmony", "the special significance of home", "the absence of repressive aspects of civilization", and "a general sense of innocence" (2000, p.20-21). Penguin picturebooks contain many of these key features including specificity of setting, and a focus on home, harmony, and innocence. The Antarctic setting is a vital element of these texts. These are stories about home, and what 'home' means to the young protagonists. In texts such as *Where is Home, Little Pip?* and Jeanne Willis's *Poles Apart* (2015) this focus on home becomes overt. Willis's text follows a family of penguins who become lost on the way to a picnic and find themselves at the North Pole. Despite the visual similarities between the North and South Poles, the penguins feel an urgent drive to return home. On their return journey, they travel through many major world cities and are amazed by the things that they see there, but the constant refrain is "but it wasn't home." The depiction of a "sense of

harmony" is also evident within the majority of penguin picturebooks, as is "a general sense of innocence." All of the animals Pip meets in *Where is Home* are friendly and non-threatening, and her reunion with her parents at the end seems inevitable. Although all of the young protagonists experience some challenge – Pip's becoming lost, or learning to swim, the lonely penguin's search to find his friends, or the search for home in *Poles Apart* – none of the characters appear to be in real danger and the sense of threat and hostility often connected with the Antarctic landscape is notably absent. *Poles Apart* has significant similarities with Oliver Jeffers's 2005 *Lost and Found* which also features a young penguin who finds himself lost. Much of the action of *Lost and Found* takes place outside the Antarctic and charts the penguin's attempt to return home, in this case with the help of a human child protagonist. However, the conclusion of Jeffers's text contrasts sharply with *Poles Apart*. Jeffers's penguin realises that home is rooted in relationships not place and he leaves the Antarctic to reunite with his friend, whereas Willis is interested in demonstrating the powerful sense of belonging that her protagonists feel to the Antarctic, and the importance of place to their personal and group identities. *Poles Apart* and *Lost and Found* are both unusual in including other landscapes outside the Antarctic, including urban and densely populated spaces. *Lost and Found* is particularly unusual in the context of penguin picturebooks as the texts examined in this chapter focus on the innate connection between the animal protagonist and their 'home' landscape, and the relative harmony which exists between the animals and their environment, eschewing any specific temporal indicators which would enable the reader to locate the story in a particular period, and embracing the essential elements of the mythic chronotope described by Nikolajeva.

Nikolajeva cites research which contends that "small children have no sense of linear time" (Nikolajeva, 2000, p.5). She further records, "According to child psychology, children until around the age of 5 live entirely in the present. By the age of 7-8 children learn to

handle linear time, that is, clocks, days of the week, months and years" (Nikolajeva, 2000: 5). As a genre aimed at the young readers, it is perhaps unsurprising that the penguin stories utilise a mythic chronotope. However, the significance of the adoption of this chronotope, most commonly used in idyllic or pastoral modes of writing, should not be underestimated. Anti-pastoral ecophobic representations of landscape which depict the Antarctic as a hostile and life-negating space dominate Antarctic literature. In contrast, the use of mythic time reflects an ecophilic perspective in these texts which focus on the harmonious relationships between Antarctic animal communities, and the cycles of life in the continent. Further, these texts set the family, with all the positive attributes this unit holds within children's literature, at the centre of the narrative. The mythic chronotope enables and reinforces the ecophilic representation of landscape in the penguin picturebooks, and thus is a key part of what makes this genre of Antarctic literature distinctive.

Perceptual Scaling in Penguin Picturebooks

One consequence of the "spatially limited world" of the mythic chronotope, is a narrowed perspective with an intense focus on the individuals who feature in the text and the landscape where the action takes place. Petr Horáček's *The Lonely Penguin,* opens with the sound of footsteps through the snow: "Crunch, crunch! Who's coming through the snow? It's penguin" (2011, p.2-3). The opening image is an abstractly-drawn white and blue landscape, in the centre there is a small black and white figure moving towards the reader. This first double-page spread introduces readers to the protagonist of the text, and to the world he inhabits. This picturebook contains fewer than 100 words, using images to guide the reader through the story of a young penguin who is lost and lonely, and who later finds his friends. The text focuses on the sounds and physical sensations experienced by the penguin as he travels

through a small area of the Antarctic. Horáček's text is representative of the "contracted" viewpoint which dominates Antarctic animal stories.

Many whaling and "Heroic Era" texts can be seen to utilise what Alice Curry describes as an "expanded" viewpoint. Curry argues that "whole-earth" images and other visual and literary representations of vast areas of land are representative of "expanded" viewpoints (2013, p.19). Curry writes that the "globe, as a material entity defies human comprehension" (p.20). She argues that the earth:

> exists in its own epistemic blind space, at once too tangible and too amorphous, too material and too immense. Always phenomenologically accessible – we can feel it under our feet, we can crumble it in our hands – the earth is nevertheless invisible as a planet. (p.19)

Thus, while the physical space that we inhabit can feel knowable and familiar, the earth as a whole remains intangible. According to Curry, these expanded perspectives allow humans to "contemplate, [the world] remotely, in its entirety" and have been used to counter the incomprehensibility of the earth as an abstract concept (p.19). Theorists have utilised different terminology for this expanded viewpoint. Frank White termed it "the overview effect" in his 1997 text *The Overview Effect: Space Exploration and Human Evolution* and Yaakov Garb (1990, p.272) discussed the "God's eye view" of the earth, and how this fosters masculinist ideas of landscape. I argue the terms Curry employs – contracted and expanded viewpoints – are particularly useful in discussing literary representations because of the intentionality inherent in her terms (contracted and expanded being literary choices made by the author or illustrator). Curry is also specifically writing about children's literature and, therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that her terminology most deftly accommodates picturebooks and "the mutual interanimation" of words and image (Lewis, 2001, p.36) that typifies these texts. Additionally, where "whole earth view" and "overview" imply fixed,

distanced positions, the contracted and expanded viewpoints terminology allows for a spectrum of representative positions. This enables the terms to be usefully applied not only to 'whole earth' images, but also to images or descriptions which encompass vast areas of land.

The contracted and expanded perspectives that Curry touches upon can be understood as part of a process of what I will term "perceptual scaling" within literature for children. Perceptual scaling is a term primarily used in relation to the representation of data within map images such as the use of circles of varying sizes to represent population density within geographical areas.[18] However, within the context of landscape representation in children's texts, the term can usefully be applied to the relative perspectives used by authors or illustrators when representing space. These perspectives exist on a scale from extremely contracted perspectives, such as those within Horáček's text, to extremely expanded perspectives such as the 'god's eye view' which Garb discusses. Perceptual scaling analysis can help to interrogate the relationships authors create between protagonists and their environment and how authors encourage child readers to understand the landscapes being represented.

This idea of perceptual scaling is particularly interesting in relation to Antarctic literature. There is an enduring impulse within writing about the Antarctic to situate the continent within the known universe, and continually to locate the actions of the explorers within the continent. Images and descriptions which utilise an expanded perspective frequently appear in Antarctic literature for children, in particular in "Heroic Era" narratives. The early expeditions conceptualised the landscape on a vast scale, Scott aimed to reach the very centre of the Antarctic and locate the South Pole, while Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition aimed to cross the continent via the Pole. The expeditions were focused on 'conquering' the landscape and expanding the global reach of the British Empire. The

[18] For more information on the use of perceptual scaling within cartography, see Boothe, Ronald G., (2002) *Perception of the Visual Environment*, New York: Springer, pp. 79-86.

children's texts about these explorers use expanded perspectives to reflect the macro-level focus of the early expeditions. The expanded perspective in "Heroic Era" literature is evident in the frequent inclusion of overview images and maps of the Antarctic.[19] Many texts such as Hooper's *Race to the Pole* (2000, p.111), and Dowdeswell et al.'s *Scott of the Antarctic* (2012, p.18), include maps that visually depict the distances travelled by the explorers. The written text, too, describes the explorers travelling long distances through the Antarctic and the overall perspective is expansive. While the expanded viewpoint enables people to better comprehend the vastness of the planet, or the journeys of explorers, it can also engender "a sense of dislocation from humanity's material context" (Curry, 2013, p.19). This perspective within "Heroic Era" literature supports the imperialist attitudes to space which are embedded within the texts, as they retell and explicitly celebrate imperialist endeavours. The expanded perspective allows the child reader to view and consume the landscape as a whole, and accompanies text which describes how the landscape was conquered and claimed by the explorers.

Curry only briefly touches upon the impact of employing contracted perspectives. I argue that the concept of the contracted viewpoint, and the representational consequences of such a narrowed perspective, are worth exploring further, particularly in a genre such as penguin picturebooks, where the contracted perspective is evident in both the visual and verbal elements of the text. Antarctic literature which includes expanded perspectives of the continent represent a deeply anthropocentric, outsider view of the landscape, where protagonists are short-term visitors to the Antarctic, who need tools such as maps to orient themselves. The animal stories use contracted perspectives to focus on the relatively small spaces in which the animal protagonists live, and their sense-based understanding of the

[19] I have written more extensively on the use of maps within "Heroic Era" literature for children in '"Unstable Space: Mapping the Antarctic for Children in "Heroic Era" Antarctic Literature" in *Children's Literature in Education*, March 2017, Vol 48, Issue 1, pp 56–72. This article argues that maps are a key feature of "Heroic Era" narratives, but that these maps can risk misrepresenting the Antarctic landscape by failing to represent the inherent mutability of the continent and the shifting boarders which are characteristic of the space.

landscape. Tuan argues that alien landscapes like the Antarctic are defined by their lack of mediating spaces, or home spaces. Yet these stories depict animal protagonists who understand the Antarctic landscapes as both homeplace and home spaces and whose understanding of the world is expanded through adventures in these home spaces.

Horáček's *The Lonely Penguin* employs a contracted viewpoint from the opening page the text to tell a short, simple story about brief moments in the life of one penguin. The child reader is invited to experience the Antarctic along with the penguin protagonist. The physical distance covered by the protagonist is small, and the viewpoint offered to the reader is consistently close-up, as the penguin journeys through the landscape. The repeated refrain of 'Crunch, Crunch' provides a soundtrack to the penguin's movements through the snow. It is a story that delights in describing the various ways that the penguin traverses the space, "running", "sliding", climbing, and "jump[ing]" across the ice (2011, p.6, p,7, p.10). Horáček is interested in how it feels for the protagonist to engage playfully with the Antarctic landscape, rather than in locating the action in a specific area or charting distances covered.

By contrast, Martin Jenkin's *The Emperor's Egg*, (1999) illustrated by Jane Chapman, begins by offering an expanded viewpoint. The first page includes a rough drawn map of the world, accompanied by a description of Antarctica's position on the globe: "Down at the very bottom of the world, there's a huge island that's almost completely covered in snow and ice. It's called Antarctica, and it's the coldest, windiest place on Earth" (p.6). In this first page, the reader is offered an overview image, along with an expanded viewpoint description of the continent, listing its relative position on the globe, and its comparative environmental conditions. Within two pages, however, the viewpoint narrows dramatically. The second double-page spread shows an icy landscape with a distant silhouette of a penguin. From this point on, the text shifts to an extremely contracted viewpoint. The story focuses on one penguin family, centring on the male penguin as he protects his egg while his mate goes in

search of food. The visual imagery continues to contract until pages 12-13, which contain a beautifully drawn double-page spread of the bottom half of the male penguin. The egg is just visible on top of his feet tucked under his belly. The extreme close-up image allows the reader to see the fluffy white feathers of the penguin's lower stomach. The dramatic colours of the penguin are emphasised as his black feet, sticking out at the bottom of the image, contrast sharply with his white stomach and the white egg.

Figure 11: **Contracted images of penguin protagonist and egg from Martin Jenkins, *The Emperor's Egg*, pp12-13.**

The mother's long journey to the sea to get food is mentioned but not depicted visually. The visual and narrative focus remains on the father and his unborn child, who are rooted in a very small area in the middle of the Antarctic.

Through the focus on place, and the connection between place and the life-cycle of the penguin family, Jenkins' text represents what Alice Curry terms "phenomenal belonging" (2013, p.21). It shows the intrinsic understanding of place that the penguins demonstrate, and the strategies that they have developed to enable them to thrive in the Antarctic. The illustration Chapman creates to depict the birth of the penguin chick is intensely contracted. This image features a close-up of the lower torso and feet of the male penguin, above his black feet a tiny head protrudes. On the ground lie the shards of the egg from which the chick

has just hatched. The extreme close-up enables the child reader to see the tiny distance that separates the newly-born chick from the ice which could kill him. Only his father's feet, which are well used to the freezing conditions, protect the chick from freezing to death. This intense close-up is also used for the cover of the book.

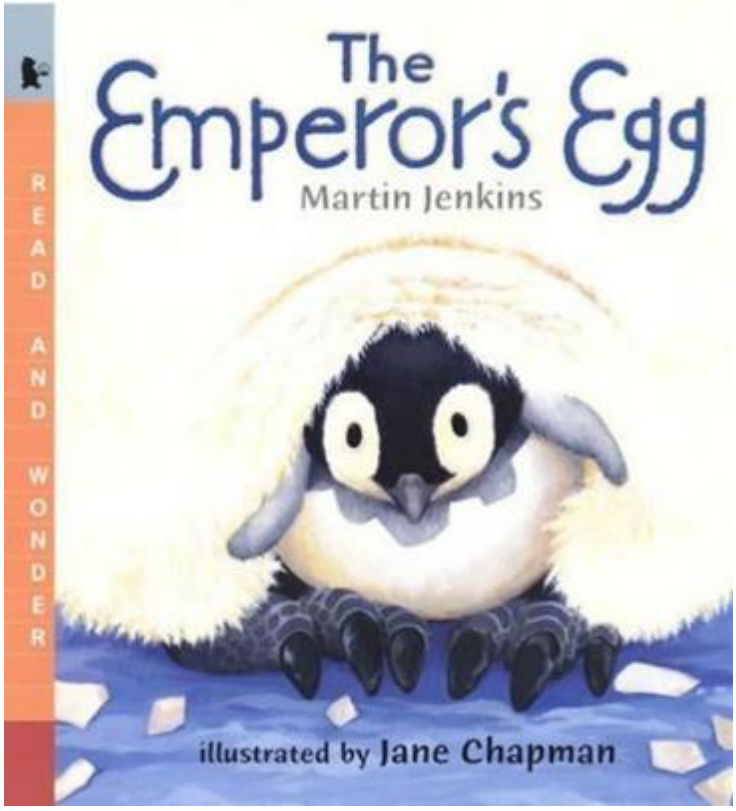


Figure 12: Jenkins, *The Emperor's Egg*, cover image

Jenkins also describes the male penguin feeding his chick. The reader is told, "deep down in the father penguin's throat there's a pouch where he makes something rather like milk. And that's what he feeds to his hungry chick" (1999, p.24). Here the viewpoint further contracts, moving within the penguin's body seeking out hidden spaces, rendering the image increasingly intimate.

Karma Wilson's *Where is Home, Little Pip?* (2008), also illustrated by Jane Chapman, explores belonging using a similarly contracted viewpoint. The text tells the story of a young female penguin, Pip, who becomes lost in the Antarctic and goes on a quest to find her parents and her home. There is no specific introduction to the Antarctic (such as in *The*

Emperor's Egg), instead the text opens with an image of the protagonist, Pip, and her parents, in their home on the pebbly shore of the Antarctic. It is a relatively close-up image of the small family, the parents' heads are bent down towards their chick, which draws the viewer's eye towards the small chick in the middle of the two larger penguins. This is an image that Chapman uses repeatedly throughout all three *Little Pip* books. In addition to drawing the reader's eye towards the chick(s), it also reduces the size difference between the adult and child penguins, and allows the illustrator to focus in on the family using tighter framing. Early in *Where is Home, Little Pip?*, Wilson introduces the song which Pip's parents sing for their chick:

> Our home is where the land is free
>
> From hill or mountain, twig or tree
>
> In our pebbly nest by the stormy sea
>
> Where Mummy and Daddy and Pip
>
> Makes three.
>
> (Wilson, 2008, n.pag)

This song explicitly establishes the Antarctic as a homeplace for Pip and her family. The elements frequently used to depict the Antarctic as an alien space – such as the lack of familiar features like trees, the rough seas and harsh climate – are instead part of a love-song to the small area of the Antarctic that provides a home for this family. The key narrative event of the text occurs when Pip becomes lost while chasing a feather and suddenly finds herself alone. On her journey to find her parents and her home, Pip encounters many other creatures and asks them, "Can you tell me, where is home?" (n.pag). The other animals including a whale, a kelp gull and some pack-dogs, lovingly describe their homes. While these descriptions help Pip understand how other animals live, she is continually disappointed and sadly declares "But that's not *my* home" (n.pag, emphasis in original). This text tells

child readers that home is not one specific place, but is a subjective idea, and for many is rooted in early memories, or connected to family and community. The contracted viewpoint of this text comes in the form of repeated close-up images of Pip, her parents, and the other animals she encounters. The contracted viewpoint also extends to the narrative which details the short journey of a young penguin who has ventured just beyond the limits of her own home space and begins to understand that there is a world outside her home, and that other individuals feel the same kind of phenomenal belonging with these landscapes, as she does to her own pebbly home.

The effect of the contracted viewpoint is that these stories create rich, textural images of the Antarctic landscape, and the inhabitants of the space. They offer the reader an insight into how the Antarctic might be experienced by individuals who understand the landscape as home, and who are able to endure the challenging environmental conditions. In contrast to "Heroic Era", whaling, and adventure genres, the animal stories use a contracted viewpoint and a narrow focus on the everyday lives of the animals who call the Antarctic home and so situate being in the Antarctic as fundamentally ordinary, rather than extraordinary. In addition, these stories challenge the child reader's established notions of physical space; specifically, they ask the reader to reconsider the conventional divisions between inside and outside space, and how these are associated with homeplaces and alien space respectively. The notion of home is hugely significant within human culture. Gaston Bachelard talks about the home as "the human being's first world" and argues that "always, in our daydreams, the house is a large cradle" (1994, p.7). Bachelard asserts that ideas of home are so evocative that these spaces need only be briefly mentioned before "the reader who is 'reading a room' leaves off reading and starts to think of some place in his own past" (1994, p.14). Bachelard notes the frequent comparisons that are drawn between human and animal shelters and argues that "well-being takes us back to the primitiveness of the refuge" and, indeed, that images of

nests and shells "bring out the primitiveness in us" (1994, p.91). Home is associated with basic primitive desires for shelter, safety, and warmth, while also being associated with ideas of family and stability.

Jane Suzanne Carroll posits home as "a sanctuary" and, drawing on Edward Relph, specifically differentiates between the house and the home: "Whereas the function of the house may be narrowly defined as 'a shelter against heat, cold, rain, thieves and the inquisitive' […] the function of the home […] is far broader" (2011, p.18). In the penguin picturebooks, we see the home which is explicitly not a house. The home in these stories does not offer the "shelter against heat, cold, rain" that conventional houses do, however it still commands the same levels of emotional attachment. The homes represented in the penguin picturebooks are alien spaces reimagined as home spaces. This requires a total reconsideration of conventional ideas of home. However, a key common element remains, and that is the family or community as the heart of the home. This cliché is here literalised, because the penguin picturebooks present homes which lack the physical attributes which Carroll identifies as characteristic of both the home and the sanctuary topos: "verticality, strict boundaries, and an intense, interiorising central focus" (2011, p.19). Instead, home in penguin stories is represented by individuals, communities, and by specific areas of space that are not marked off by identifiable boundaries or vertical sheltered structures. In *The Emperor's Egg*, the community life of the penguin colony is depicted through images of fathers working together to ensure the group's survival. The text describes how the penguins "snuggle up together and shuffle over the ice in a great big huddle" (Jenkins, 1999, p.18). The image that accompanies this text shows a mass of penguins huddled together. The wind whips snow up around the group and the background is a chaos of blue and white, but the text that accompanies the image assures the reader that "the penguins don't seem to mind" (p.18) and are kept warm by the huddle. Here**,** we see how the community come together to create

shelter using their bodies. This intimate, contracted view of a community and their unique mechanisms for creating a home space asks the child reader to consider their idea of home. These texts use the powerfully resonant term 'home,' sometimes in the form of repeated refrains such as "but it wasn't home" or "But that's not *my* home," and ask the child reader to consider the possibility of 'home' existing without the customary structure of the house, and in a space which is frequently represented as a hostile and alien space.

Alternative Representations of Gender

The choice of penguin protagonists in these texts enables, and even compels, authors to depict gender roles within family dynamics that move away from the conventional images of the mother as primary carer and father as provider. Male and female Emperor and Adélie penguins, which are the primary breeds featured in penguin picturebooks, share many of the key duties involved in raising their young. Some stories such as Willis's *Poles Apart* (2015), anthropomorphise their characters to the extent that the distinctive gender roles evident in penguin societies are lost. The penguin family who feature in *Poles Apart* adhere to stereotypical human gender roles, with the father leading the pack (albeit rather ineptly) and the mother providing food and monitoring the behaviour of her children. However, many other stories highlight the alternative gender dynamic within penguin families. Martin Jenkin's *The Emperor's Egg* depicts the vital role that male Emperor penguins play in the incubation and early life of penguin chicks, as the male stays with the unborn chick, while the female penguin leaves in search of food. It is the male penguin who cares for the egg, and who is present at the birth and must feed the new-born chick, an action that is captured through intimate images of father and child in the text. The images of the Emperor penguin feeding his chick are accompanied by text describing this process. As we have seen, there is a clear role-reversal being portrayed, as the male penguin takes on the primary caregiver role

while the female penguin acts as provider for the family. This text is potentially problematic in its representation of gender roles as the text depicts the female penguins "swimming about, getting as fat as they can, eating as much as they can, and generally having a very nice time" (Jenkins, 1999, p.11), which is negatively contrasted with the hardship experienced by the male penguin. However, the text investigates gender roles within penguin communities, and shows images of masculinity which contrast sharply with the conventional depictions of masculinity in many Antarctic texts. The relationships between the males in the community are described in tender and physically intimate terms, as the male penguins huddle together for warmth. Wilson's third *Little Pip* book, *What's in the Egg, Little Pip?* (2012) also focuses on the role of the male penguin in child rearing, as Pip's mother is absent for the majority of the text, while her father incubates their egg.

Greta Gaard writes that ecofeminism begins "with a recognition that the position and treatment of women, animals and nature are not separable" and involves an examination of the "logic of domination" that enables exploitation (2009, p.323). Gaard suggests that readers should interrogate the relationships between humans and animals that are explored in literature for children and consider 'what kind of agency does the text recognize in nature?' (p.330). Texts such as Wilson's *Where is Home, Little Pip?* challenge existing depictions of gender in Antarctic literature through actively focusing on female experience in the space. Wilson's text features a young female protagonist (Pip) who searches for her home and family after becoming lost. She meets a blue whale, a kelp gull, and a dog team, all of whom are identified as female. Wilson is careful to use female pronouns for these animals. The reader is told: "A mighty blue whale poked *her* gigantic head out of the water"; "The gull ruffled *her* feathers"; and "One of the four-legged creatures wagged *her* tail" (2008, n.pag, emphasis added). The Antarctic world that Wilson and Chapman create is populated by female characters whose understanding of the landscape is connected to their roles as mothers. The

representation of the blue whale, in particular, is an image of female power combined with maternal tenderness. The whale is twice described as "mighty" and the text and images represent her enormous physical size and power for the reader. Wilson and Chapman's determination to represent female animal subjectivity in an environment which has frequently been depicted as a masculinised space encourages an ecofeminist reading of the text. Such a reading of *Where is Home, Little Pip?*, highlights the text's interest in the intersection of women, children, and nature, an emphasis which can be seen in the decision to depict a protagonist who is a young female animal, and the text's examination of ideas of home, motherhood, and sense-based relationships with the natural world. Wilson's representation of the Antarctic works against ecophobic depictions of the landscape as a hostile (often female) monster which pursues and kills (male) human invaders. Instead, the reader is offered an insight into the relationships that Antarctic animal communities have with their environment: the penguins have created their nests in the pebbly beaches of the Antarctic, and the gulls have found shelter in the craggy cliffs. Using colour, Chapman's illustrations depict the strong emotional attachment that each animal has with their home space. On double-page spreads, the animals' images of home appear in warm colours – pinks and yellows which contrast sharply with the cold whites and blues which dominate on the opposite page:

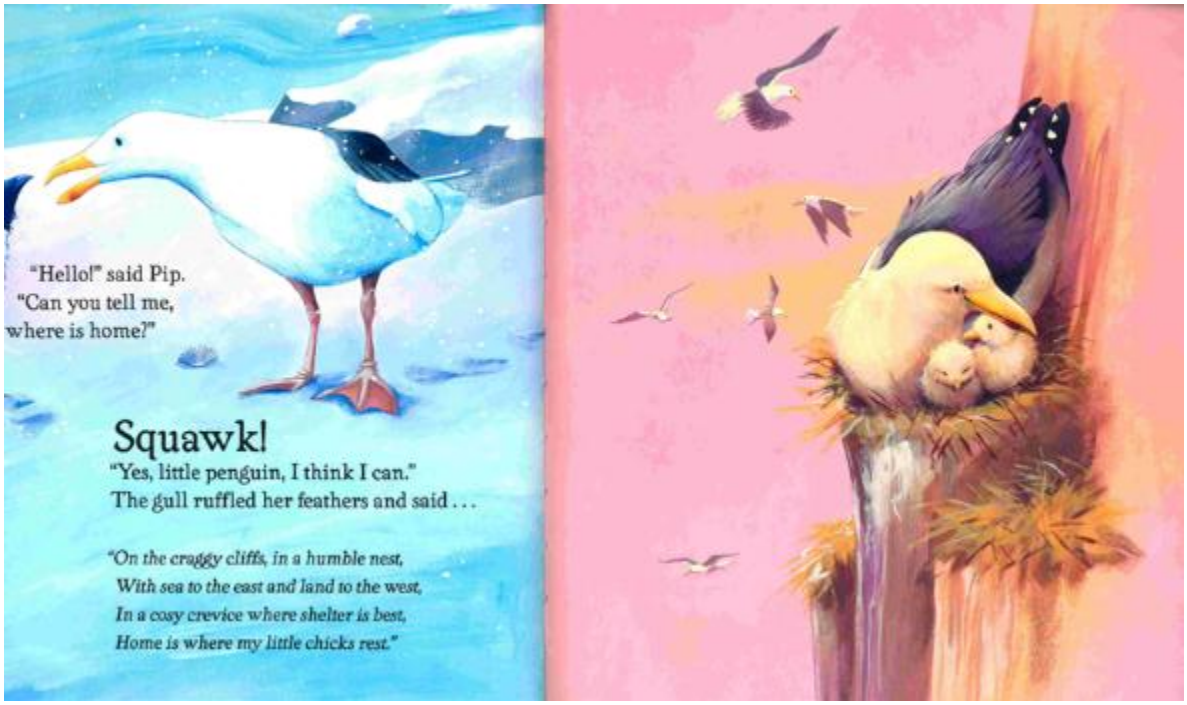


Figure 13: Animal 'homeplaces' in the Antarctic in Karma Wilson's, *Where is Home, Little Pip?*, illustrated by Jane Chapman, n.pag.

Wilson's Antarctic world is populated by animals who clearly exhibit agency and whose lives have meaning without any connection to, or function in, the human world. Wilson offers readers an insight into how the animal inhabitants of the Antarctic, even those not indigenous to the continent such as the dog in the dog-pack, conceptualise their own relationship to the landscape, and how their identity as mothers influences their understanding of their environment. In contrast to the life-negating Antarctic female figures, seen first in Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' and re-appearing in "Heroic Era" texts, the female characters in Wilson's text are life-giving and life-sustaining. The animals are nurturing and demonstrate their deep affection for their children. Yet they are still depicted as powerful and independent. They understand their environment in relation to their families, and their descriptions of their homes show how the landscape can support new life. *Where is Home, Little Pip?* is unique among the texts examined in this thesis for its choice of a predominantly female cast, a fact that goes some way to demonstrate the general masculinist bias of Antarctic children's literature. An ecofeminist reading of Wilson's story demonstrates that the text is innovative

not only in its depiction of gender but also, vitally, in how it explores the intersection between gender and environment, and how depictions of landscape can be radically transformed through shifting the gendered perspective of the protagonists.

Subverting the Penguin Story Genre

Penguin narratives reflect an ecophilic perspective on the Antarctic and often implicitly highlight ecological issues that affect the animal inhabitants of the continent. Some Antarctic animal stories go further, placing an explicit focus on environmental themes, and representing the Antarctic as a space which is at risk due to human exploitation or indifference. The addition of an overt ecological perspective to these texts results in changes to many of the key features of the penguin story, particularly the functioning of time in the narratives. This overt focus on environmental themes is in line with broader cultural shifts which have seen the creation of numerous environmental action groups for children such as Earth Force, Kids for a Clean Environment, Children of the Earth and Grass Roots and Shoots, Jane Goodall's global humanitarian and environmental program for children. The increasing focus on the connection between children and the environment is also reflected in children's literature. Environmentally engaged texts for children have become increasingly prevalent since the 1990s. Texts such as Michael Morpurgo and Christina Balit's *Blodin the Beast* (1995), which examines the possibility of ecological destruction, and Jeannie Baker's *Belonging* (2004) which is set in the aftermath of environmental disaster, are just some prominent examples of the many texts published for children since the 1990s which contain overt themes and work towards fostering a sense of environmental-consciousness in child readers.[20]

[20] Zofia Niemtus's article 'The best books about green living for children of all ages' published in The Guardian in April 2017 gives an indication of the breadth of 'green' literature available for child readers. Niemtus highlights 21 texts for children from toddlers to YA readers. https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2017/apr/14/the-best-books-about-green-living-for-children-of-all-ages. Other resources such as the website www.LoveReading4kids.co.uk lists over 50 'Green Reads' for children,

One text that contains explicit ecological messages, and that subverts established patterns within penguin stories is Helen Cowcher's *Antarctica* (1990), a short picturebook in which the author introduces the reader to the animal inhabitants of the Antarctic and gives an insight into their lives. *Antarctica* is not exclusively focused on penguins, instead featuring a range of animal protagonists. Like other texts examined above, Cowcher's text concentrates on key moments such as migration and birth. The text describes how the different animal communities work collectively to mitigate the dangers posed by the environment. After introducing one individual male Emperor penguin who is carefully keeping his egg safe while his mate is away, Cowcher shows how he, and his community, survive the "freezing winter storms" in the Antarctic (1990, n.pag):

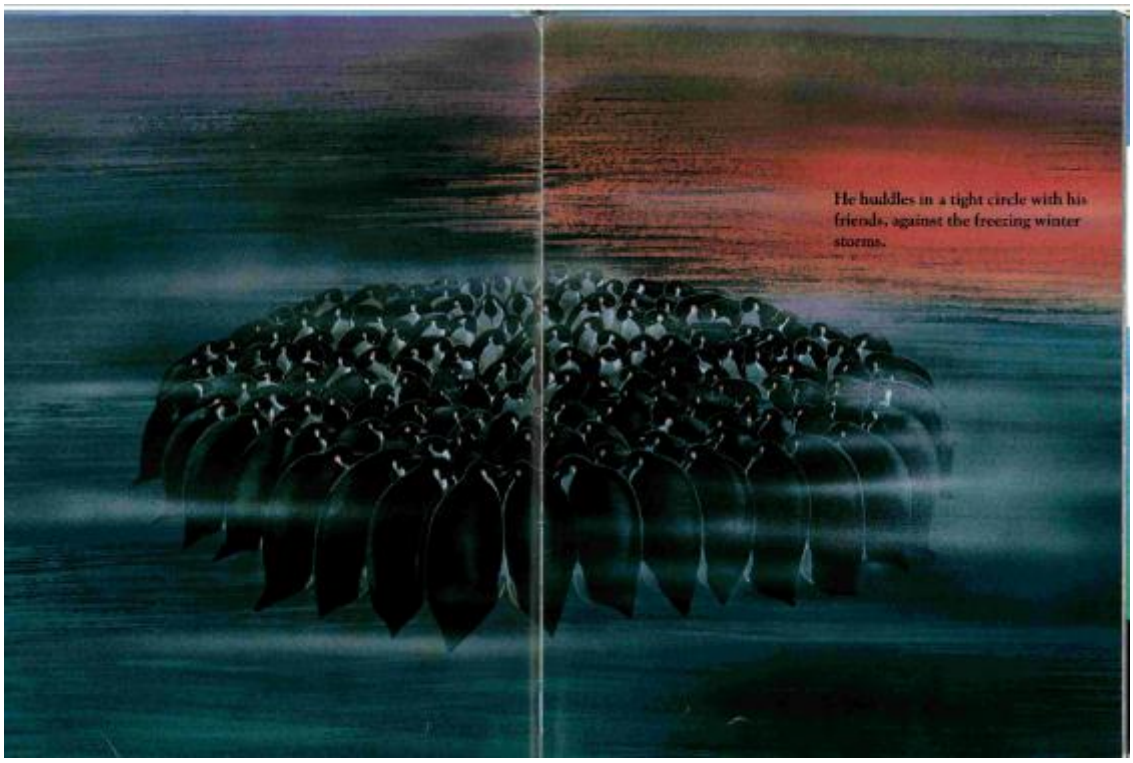


Figure 14: Penguin communities in Helen Cowcher's, *Antarctica*, n.pag.

This image of the penguin community huddled together for warmth is one which repeats, in various forms, across many of the penguin stories. It illustrates how each member of the

http://www.lovereading4kids.co.uk/genre/pla/Green-Reads.html, further indicating the variety and breadth of contemporary publishing about the environment for young readers.

community relies on, and contributes to, the safety of the group. Cowcher does not present an entirely harmonious natural world. She describes the dangers that 'lurk' in the sea where the Emperor penguins hunt. A close-up image of the face of the "ferocious Leopard seal" (n.pag) over a double-page spread, makes it clear to the reader that this underwater world is a hazardous place. However, there is a balance to the world that Cowcher depicts at the opening of her narrative. The penguins are hunting fish to feed their young, and the Leopard seals are hunting penguins to provide for their own families. The processes of birth and growth are central to the narrative which shows intimate moments between parents and children, as the Emperor penguin feeds his chick, the Weddell seal "climbs onto the ice to have her pup" (n.pag), and the Adélie penguins perch on their pebbly nests to keep their eggs warm.

It is into this balanced and relatively harmonious world that humans arrive as a destructive force. Cowcher describes that "some men have built a basecamp. Suddenly the Adélies hear a terrible whirring noise: Helicopters! They panic and leave their eggs unguarded" (n.pag). The image that accompanies this written text is one of utter chaos. Humans appear hidden in a helicopter which occupies the centre of the image. All around, the penguins flee, uncoordinated and without thinking of their chicks. The previous pages have shown the lengths to which animal families will go to protect their young, and to provide food, but the entrance of the humans has caused panic and made the animals abandon their eggs, which are promptly attacked by skuas. The harmony and co-operative spirit of the penguin colony has been disrupted by terror caused by humans and their technology. It is not only the Adélies who have been disrupted by the presence of the humans: "The Emperors too are uneasy' and 'Out at sea, anxious songs ring out from the depths" (napg). This depiction is neither pastoral nor ecophobic, instead it shows a world where nature must fear man. The didactic message on the final page is explicit: "The penguins and seals have always shared their world with ancient enemies, the Skuas and Leopard seals. But these new arrivals seem

more dangerous. The seals and penguins cannot tell yet whether they will share or destroy their beautiful Antarctica…" (n.pag). This last page, and the interanimation of word and image on the page, reflects the overall message of the text. The position of the animals in the foreground underscores the text's focus on these animals and their way of life. On the horizon, the ship displays the encroaching human presence in the landscape. The animals in the foreground are shown in profile, they have one eye on the human intruders, and one eye looking out to the reader, drawing the reader into the text asking them to engage with the issues that have been highlighted, at the same time as they are looking at each other. The ellipsis at the end of the sentence (which is also the end of the text) implies that this is an issue which is not yet resolved; that we exist at the precipice of environmental disaster, but that this disaster could still be averted. Like the eye-line of the animals, the ellipsis asks the reader to consider what they want to happen, and, perhaps, what they could do to ensure that the environment is preserved rather than destroyed.

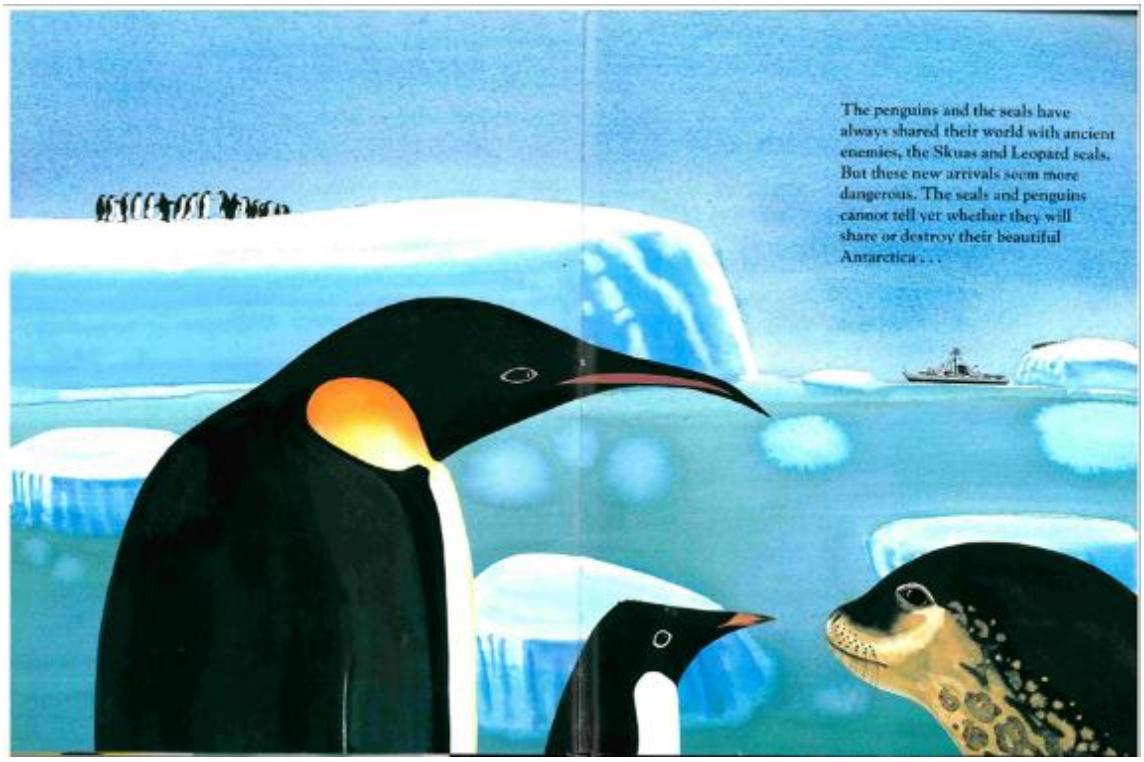


Figure 15: Final image from Helen Cowcher's, *Antarctica*, n.pag.

This focus on the future is indicative of the forward-facing, linear chronotope that is in operation in Cowcher's text. The functioning of time in Cowcher's *Antarctica* is one of the ways that it subverts established patterns within the penguin story genre. The mythic chronotope that dominates penguin stories creates narratives that are cyclical, spatially specific, and employ iterative frequency. The majority of penguin stories are not located in a specific period, but are representative of long-established patterns of life. The opening sections of *Antarctica* seem to take place in mythic time, as Cowcher focuses on birth, renewal, and established patterns. However, the entrance of the humans disturbs these routines and creates a chronotopic shift. Cowcher's text utilises a chronotope that I will term 'brink-time.' This chronotope is forward-looking and linear, as the text focuses on the potential destruction of established routines and ways of life in the Antarctic. Brink-time speaks to a past that is perceived as stable, and to a future that is threateningly uncertain. Unlike the linear chronotopes of the whaling or adventure narratives, brink-time moves ever forwards but anticipates a cataclysmic end to the processes and patterns of life that have been represented. While texts in mythic time are effectively timeless, detailing events that have been occurring for hundreds of years, *Antarctica* is rooted in a very specific period of human history. Written after the 1984 discovery of the hole in the ozone layer, this text speaks to modern concerns about the damage done to Antarctic landscapes and wildlife through human interference. While progress in other linear Antarctic chronotopes is positive, forward movements through time in brink-time are positioned as negative, as irreversible damage is done to the landscape and wildlife. Brink-time narratives share many qualities with dystopian texts set in a post-apocalyptic future. Curry writes that "in much young adult fiction, apocalypse as tipping-point is shown to result in environmental change" (2013, p.25). Texts which operate in brink-time depict a point before the apocalypse, but the importance of the tipping point in relation to environmental issues remains. Through the use of a brink-time

chronotope, Cowcher inserts a call-to-action for her child reader, encouraging the reader to think beyond the specific text and consider environmental issues and the roles that humans play in the destruction of natural habitats such as the Antarctic.

The use of brink-time, and the focus on human threats to the Antarctic environment and wildlife, also subverts other key features of the genre. This includes the "general sense of harmony" and "innocence", typical in mythic time, which characterise the majority of penguin stories. Unlike texts such as Wilson's *Little Pip* books, or Horáček's *The Lonely Penguin* or *Blue Penguin*, there *is* real danger in Cowcher's *Antarctica*, and it is specifically the youngest members of the community who are most at risk. When the helicopter forces the Adélie penguins to flee their nests, the unborn chicks are eaten by opportunistic skuas. This incident demonstrates that all of the penguin chicks and seal cubs depicted in the narrative face serious and even mortal threats as a result of human actions. The landscape, too, is depicted as being under threat. Cowcher writes that the Emperor penguins "have heard huge explosions, and seen ice and rock hurled high into the air" (n.pag), later she describes the ships "banging, crunching, booming nearer" (n.pag). Through these descriptions Cowcher creates a sense of impending disaster, and displays the destructive power of humans, while the references to explosions and rock and ice "hurled high into the air" (n.pag) reflect the human ability to make drastic and violent alterations to the Antarctic landscape.

In addition to engaging the reader in questions about Antarctica's future, Cowcher also subtly draws a connection between the humans and the other animals in the Antarctic, and in so doing, challenges anthropocentric ideas of ownership of geographical space. In her description of the Adélie penguins Cowcher writes, "The Adélies build their nests out of pebbles" (n.pag). On the page immediately following this, Cowcher introduces the humans saying that "just beyond the nesting place, some men have built a basecamp" (n.pag). The nesting activities of the penguins is described using the word "build" in the present tense,

indicative of cyclical patterns of time, and presenting their behaviour as natural and positive. The home-building of the men is connected to the nesting of the penguins through repetition of the term "build", but here the tense changes to the present perfect "have built", and the past event is shown to have negative consequences on the present lives of the Antarctic animals. In the final page, Cowcher reiterates this connection. The opening line of the last page asserts that the animal inhabitants of the Antarctic, even natural enemies such as penguins and Leopard seals, have always "shared their world," "But these new arrivals seem more dangerous" (n.pag), In this sentence Cowcher situates humans as animals, just like the skuas or leopard seals, but the presence of humans totally disrupts the balance which had existed amongst the other animal inhabitants of the landscape.

Cowcher's focus on animal protagonists, and her efforts to challenge anthropocentrism, prompts a posthumanist reading of the text. Posthumanist theory has been utilised by ecocritics as a means of disrupting the boundaries that have been constructed between humans and the natural world. Posthumanist scholarship is particularly useful in looking at non-human subjectivities, and how authors confer value upon subjects including animals and cyborgs, as well as offering reconsiderations of how humans interact with physical landscapes. Zoe Jacques has argued that "Children's literature and posthumanism is […] a 'natural' pairing" because children's literature has long been intrigued with "the boundaries between humans and other animals" and because this body of literature imagines "being," "as operating beyond bodily or environmental constraint" (2015, p.5). Jacques concedes that "the term posthumanism is expansive and unwieldly" (p.10) and offers the following useful definition:

> posthumanism is best understood as "postanthropocentrism" – while it usefully decentres man, the human is nevertheless crucial to its formation […] As Robert Pepperell puts it: "Post-Humanism is not about the 'End of Man' but about the

> end of a ‘man-centred’ universe, or put less phallocentrically, a ‘human-centred’ universe. (p.11)

A posthumanist reading of Cowcher’s *Antarctica* highlights how the author/illustrator situates the animal inhabitants of the Antarctic at the centre of the narrative, and depicts some of the complex social relationships that exist within Antarctic communities. In addition, utilising Jacques definition of posthumanism as postanthropocentrism, it is possible to see that through establishing humans as animals, and therefore situating them within the same category as the protagonists of the story, the text works to deconstruct hierarchies which situate humans as inherently more valuable than their non-human animal counterparts.

Geraldine Massey and Clare Bradford in an article entitled “Children as Ecocitizens” argue that “Children’s environmental texts – that is texts which thematise contemporary ecological issues – reflect shifting global agendas and predict future possibilities. One of their primary functions is to socialize young people into becoming the responsible and empathetic adults of tomorrow” (2011, p.109). Written in 1990 at a time of heightened awareness of environmental damage occurring in the Antarctic, Cowcher’s text anticipates both the themes and aims identified by Massey and Bradford, and can clearly be positioned within their category of “children’s environmental texts.” It is a text which contains an implied call-to-action for the child reader (and also the adult who has purchased the book or reads with the child). Its depictions of humans and animal communities can be read as representing a posthumanist/postanthropocentric ecological perspective that calls human hegemony into question and implicitly critiques human engagement with the natural world and our fellow animals.

In *Antarctica*, Cowcher refuses to anthropomorphise her protagonists and instead focuses on the experiences of animal inhabitants of the continent. In contrast, Jed Mercurio’s *The Penguin Expedition* (2003) features a broad cast of highly anthropomorphised penguins.

Whereas Cowcher's animals remained unnamed, Mercurio's penguins wear outfits, attend school and live in houses much like igloos in a town named "Penguinville." The text is also structurally different to Cowcher's, and many of the other Antarctic animal stories, as it is not a picturebook but a short novel. However, like Cowcher, Mercurio uses animal protagonists to present an explicit ecological message. The Antarctic setting is used to explore the issue of global warming in an environment which is highly sensitive to environmental change. The world that Mercurio creates is a microcosm of the real world. He depicts a community that has transformed from a traditional way of life (eating fish, living outdoors, hunting for food) into a modern society which has lost control over their own food source and is dependent on the local factory for both employment and food. Boss Beak, the primary antagonist, is representative of corporate greed, prioritising profits, and power, over individuals. The heroic protagonists who rise up to face Boss Beak are Scott and Humboldt, two young penguins with a keen interest in ecological science who discover the root causes of the unusually high temperatures. As the characters' names suggest, *The Penguin Expedition* is highly intertextual and draws on the literary and exploratory history of the Antarctic: Scott's name reflects Robert F. Scott and his grandfather is called Shackleton Flipper, and Humboldt's name reflects a breed of penguin and the German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt after whom the penguin is named. Like *Antarctica* this text can be seen to operate in brink-time. The text focuses on environmental disaster and the narrative begins at a tipping-point, just as the established lives of the penguin community are coming under threat. The opening line of the text establishes these themes: "On top of a towering cliff of ice stood a penguin. His name was Scott, and he was scared. The ice was melting. All around, lumps were breaking off cliffs and falling into the sea" (2003, p.7). The narrative concentrates on the rising temperatures in "Penguinville" and the young penguins' quest to discover the source of the climatic changes.

The narrative engages with environmental issues in the Antarctic and includes detailed descriptions of the impact of carbon emissions on the earth's climate.

The Penguin Expedition also considers just how difficult it is to transform concern into action. Confronted with scientific proof that the factory in their town is causing massive damage to their environment, and is threatening their continued survival, the adults choose to do nothing. They ignore the information provided by Scott and Humboldt, preferring to believe Boss Beak when he tells them that the warming they are seeing is temporary and natural. Mercurio writes: "He [Boss Beak] knew they'd believe him, if only because he was telling them exactly what they wanted to hear" (p.53). *The Penguin Expedition* depicts not only scientifically complex information behind climate science, but also the social and political complexity of environmental issues, and how these issues are often tied up with economics.

However, where Cowcher's *Antarctica* contains a clear call-to-action for the child reader, the ecological message within Mercurio's text is more muddled. The levels of anthropomorphisation in *The Penguin Expedition*, and depictions of penguins working in factories and creating toxic emissions, confuse the question about where culpability for climate change lies. Unlike Cowcher, who clearly locates humans as the source of environmental disruption, Mercurio seems simultaneously to implicate animals and humans through the highly anthropomorphised animal characters. The conclusion of the narrative is also problematic. Abandoning hope in the adult population of the town, Scott and Humboldt, along with two more young penguins, go on an expedition to the South Pole, to discover if they might be able to relocate their town to this colder part of the Antarctic. From this point on, the narrative departs from its realistic depiction of climate science, and the solutions offered become increasingly implausible. Scott locates his long-lost grandfather (Shackleton Flipper) at the South Pole and they realise that the rising temperatures have made the once-

freezing landscape habitable for the penguins (complete with fish-filled lakes). The narrative concludes with the entire community relocating to the South Pole after 'Penguinville' is destroyed by rising temperatures. The decision to relocate the town to the South Pole, and the promise that this new town will be 'pollution free' does not provide a framework for either individual or community action. Contemporary children's films which explore environmental issues have been criticised for offering this kind of unrealistic and conveniently swift conclusion to complex problems. Sarah McFarland argues: "With their optimistic happy Hollywood endings, both films [*Happy Feet* and *Over the Hedge*, both released in 2006] show us that we have no obligation to change our approach to the environment" (2003, p.101). *The Penguin Expedition*, too, leaves its reader with "no obligation" to change behaviour, and mixed messages relating to the complexity of the environmental issue at stake. However, both Cowcher's *Antarctica* and Mercurio's *The Penguin Expedition* demonstrate how the penguin story genre can be adapted and subverted to tell stories which are more politically engaged, or which seek to reinsert humans, and the impact of human activity, into Antarctic narratives. They also demonstrate how time can be an important part of an ecological ethic within children's texts, and how the brink-time chronotope can be used as part of an ecopedagogical analysis of texts for children.

Conclusion

Since the 1990s, a wide range of texts for children that are explicitly ecological in focus have been published, such as Peter Haswell's *It's Now or Never* (1992) John Burningham's *Oi Get Off Our Train* (1989), and Jeannie Baker's *Belonging* (2004). There are also many Antarctic texts for adults which focus on the "wilderness value" of Antarctica, and Leane argues that these texts began emerging as early as the 1960s (2012, p.46). Leane charts the development of the 'eco-thriller' genre within Antarctic literature for adults and she cites texts such as

David Burke's *Monday at McMurdo* (1967) as an early example of this genre. In view of the prominence of the Antarctic in environmental debates, particularly those leading to the adoption of the Madrid Protocol, it is somewhat surprising that there are not more environmentally engaged Antarctic stories for children, such as *Antarctica* or *The Penguin Expedition*.

However, in the context of Antarctic literature for children, all of the penguin stories examined in this chapter are nothing short of revolutionary. These texts represent a radical perspective on the Antarctic landscape. These texts connect the Antarctic landscape – from the pebbly shores to the icy interior – with ideas of home. The Antarctic landscape has been represented as a landscape of death for centuries, from the early work of Coleridge and Poe, through to twentieth century adventure narratives for children. In contrast, the penguin stories depict the Antarctic as a landscape filled with life. These stories explore themes such as birth, family, and community relationships and, in doing so, they highlight the landscapes important function as a homeplace and home space for a wide variety of Antarctic animals.

The animals who inhabit this space are represented as individual, thinking subjects, rather than as commodities that can be exploited for financial gain. It is interesting to note that whaling literature, one of the earliest genres of Antarctic fiction for children, and penguin stories, which comprise one of the newest genres, both centre on animals. The differences between these two genres are indicative of some of the cultural changes which have taken place within the Antarctic and in the popular engagement with the environment. The penguin stories demonstrate a desire to preserve the Antarctic wilderness, not to tame or conquer it. They celebrate traditional, non-human ways of life in this space and, by focusing on young protagonists, they imply that this way of life will, and should, continue. The stories demonstrate a postanthropocentric interest in the non-human history of the Antarctic, and in de-centring the human within narratives set in this landscape. This provides a challenge to the

child reader, who is asked to consider subjectivity as existing beyond the human world, and to reconsider established ideas of home and conventional gender dynamics. However, the erasure of the human presence in the Antarctic could also be seen to be problematic, because it simultaneously erases the damage done by humans to animal habitats, and the dangers still posed to this environment. Texts such as Cowcher's *Antarctica* and Mercurio's *The Penguin Expedition* reintroduce the human while retaining a focus on, and investment in, the animal inhabitants of the continent.

Even those texts that do not include a direct call-to-action can still be seen as offering a radical perspective on the Antarctic: the landscape and animal inhabitants have inherent value, that is not only connected with their potential to be exploited by humans. Ecophilic texts such as the penguin stories help to counterbalance the ecophobic representations of the landscape which commonly appear in British literature for children set in the Antarctic. If, as David Sobel argues, "We can cure the malaise of ecophobia with ecophilia" (1996, p.5), then texts such as these penguin stories are a welcome addition to the field of Antarctic children's literature, as they begin to redress the overwhelmingly ecophobic emphasis of representations of this landscape which dominate writing about the Antarctic for children.

Conclusion

Antarctic literature for children is a fascinating and varied field comprising a broad variety of texts ranging from whaling and fantastic adventure narratives to penguin stories for very young readers. Literary representations of the Antarctic for child readers have changed significantly over the past century and large numbers of texts continue to be published today. Despite this, Antarctic literature for children has never previously been considered as a distinct body of work, or been the subject of significant critical analysis. This thesis focuses on how the continent has been represented specifically for child readers, and the impact of children's literature on the cultural representations of the Antarctic. The exploration, in Chapters Two and Three, of the impact of children's authors and children's literature on the narratives of both Scott and Shackleton, illustrates that children's texts do not simply draw on the adult writing about the continent, but rather that there is a dialogue between adult and children's literatures, and, in fact, that children's literature has played a key role in shaping wider cultural conceptions of the Antarctic. All of the genres of Antarctic literature examined here draw on existing literature for child readers, from classic boys' adventure stories and Victorian morality tales to modern environmental literature. There are also clear connections to adult literature and authors such as Herman Melville in the whaling texts, or Jules Verne, Edgar Allen Poe and Samuel Coleridge within the adventure literature. Many of the texts are complex and intertextual, intentionally referencing other genres or specific works, however all of the authors share a focus on the Antarctic as a key element of the text rather than a neutral setting for their narrative. In all of the texts examined here the Antarctic functions as an active narrative element, shaping the plot, sometimes even acting as primary antagonist, or in the case of Cowcher's *Antarctic* (1990) and Markle's *Animals Robert Scott Saw* (2008), as the focal point for an ecopedagogical moral for the child reader.

Key Findings and Critical Contributions

This thesis provides the first detailed examination of the field of British Antarctic literature for children, demonstrating how this landscape has been constructed as a wilderness within British literature for children, and analysing how representations of the Antarctic have changed over the past 120 years. My analysis reveals that there are six dominant genres in the field and this thesis examines each genre in depth, tracing how different genres have developed and declined and how these genres reflect changing cultural perceptions of Antarctica. I explore the different ways that this landscape has been represented for children: as a testing ground where boys transition to adulthood, as a landscape for men to demonstrate their inherent heroic qualities, as a deeply uncanny space, and as a vulnerable wilderness endangered by human visitors. The thesis charts the evolution of the field of Antarctic literature for children produced in Britain and the broad movement from exploitation to preservation, and from ecophobic to ecophilic, which has occurred in the past 120 years. However, this thesis also demonstrates that there is not a simple movement from ecophobic to ecophilic, and that many contemporary texts continue to perpetuate ecophobic perspectives on the Antarctic.

The use of genre as an organising framework for the thesis has helped to identify continuities, problems, and gaps in the representation of the Antarctic, and highlights the need for greater critical, historical, and environmental awareness on the part of authors writing for children. The focus on genre has helped to demonstrate the enduring interest in stories of the 'Heroic Era' and the remarkable continuity with which these stories have been retold for children for the past century. This continuity can be seen to be indicative of a lack of critical analysis of the 'ur' texts on the part of authors retelling the stories for children. Scott and Shackleton's published diaries and expeditionary accounts are seen as historical records rather than literary narratives influenced by children's literature and foundational Antarctic texts.

The resultant perception of the "Heroic Era" narratives as historical fiction allows authors to retell essentially nationalistic stories without attracting the levels of critical interrogation which might be expected to accompany the publication of similarly nationalistic fictional adventure stories.

Moreover, the "Heroic Era" narratives are rarely seen within the broader context of British imperialism, despite the fact that the early expeditions were explicitly positioned as imperialist endeavours. Shackleton's *Endurance* expedition was officially titled the "Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition" and the territories claimed by Scott, Shackleton, and other early British Antarctic explorers form the largest remaining element of the British imperial portfolio, now known as the Overseas Territories. Drawing on Klaus Dodds's work on the cultural geography of the Antarctic, I argue that Antarctica should be seen as a postcolonial landscape, and the current and past engagement with the continent should be interrogated in the broader context of nineteenth and twentieth-century European imperialism. As detailed in Chapter Two, Dodds notes that the lack of an indigenous human population in the Antarctic, combined with the harsh environmental conditions, has resulted in a perception that the "conquest and occupation" (2006, p.61) of Antarctica cannot be considered as an example of colonialist activity. However, Dodds convincingly argues that this landscape *should* be seen within the context of other imperial or colonial activities citing the use of imperial practices such as surveying, mapping, naming, and claiming ownership of territories within Antarctic exploration, and noting that the territorial claims of early explorers have enabled nations such as Britain to retain control over access to the Antarctic through the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS). Dodds asserts that the ATS "rewarded colonial appropriation" (2006, p.62) and notes that formerly colonised states such as Malaysia and Antigua have raised "issues relating to the geopolitics of knowledge and the political hegemony of international regimes such as the ATS" (2002, p.194).

Importantly, as Dodds observes, ignoring the imperial nature of Antarctic expeditions allows authors, scholars, and politicians to continue to celebrate Antarctic exploration unreservedly. We see this unqualified celebration most overtly within children's literature, which has acted as a refuge for the heroic reputations of Scott and Shackleton. While prominent imperialists such as Cecil Rhodes have received significant scrutiny,[21] Scott, Shackleton, and their contemporaries are not considered within this same context. Instead, Scott and Shackleton have come to represent the acceptable face of Britain's colonialist and imperialist endeavours. The ostensible focus on individuals in the "Heroic Era" narratives disguises an implicit celebration of British history and British heroism. The fact that there were no indigenous peoples in the Antarctic clearly sets imperial activities in the continent apart from other colonialist endeavours in which peoples were subjugated and their lands appropriated, but it does not mean that we should not consider these activities as part of a wider imperial project. Scott and Shackleton were members of the British establishment, Scott was an officer in the Royal Navy, and the Antarctic expeditions were part of a concerted effort to claim and control vast areas of land. As J. Kennedy Maclean's 1910 children's book *Heroes of the Polar Seas* notes: "The main object of the expedition, as Captain Scott has described it, is to reach the South Pole and secure for the British Empire the honour of that achievement" (p.379). It was symbolically important to the British establishment, particularly, as Francis Spufford has recorded, to institutions such as the Royal Geographical Society, that British explorers conquered the Antarctic. These expeditions were focused on extending the British Empire and demonstrating the continuing dominance of this Empire at a time when the

[21] In late 2015 and early 2016 a campaign to remove a statue commemorating Rhodes from Oriel College Oxford gained national press coverage. The campaign failed to get the statue removed but prompted widespread debate about Britain's imperial legacy and figures such as Rhodes. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/jan/15/oxford-students-cecil-rhodes-statue-removed More recently, as debate over confederate statues in the US has resulted in protests, the broader legacy of colonial figures in the UK has been highlighted and has prompted discussion across the UK. http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15525309.Should_we_tear_down_Scotland_s_statues_to_British_Empire_builders_and_slavers_/

United States was growing in power and influence and nationalist movements were developing within British colonies. I argue that these stories continue to be retold and the achievements of the men celebrated precisely because they are seen as indicative of imperial Britain's exploratory and scientific achievements and yet, the broader imperial context into which Antarctic exploration fits is almost entirely omitted from Antarctic literature for children. Payne's *Three Boys in Antarctica* (1912) and McCaughrean's *The White Darkness* (2005) are among the very small number of texts examined here that explicitly encourage readers to question the imperialist approach to the Antarctic that accompanied the "Heroic Era" expeditions. My research findings suggest that publishers and critics of children's literature should perhaps consider how these stories are represented for child readers, and the use of stories such as these to continue to celebrate British imperialism, and the ways in which such stories continue to celebrate imperial values.

The enduring public interest in stories of "Heroic Era" exploration has also resulted in the history of whaling in the Antarctic being overlooked or elided in twenty-first century representations of the continent for child readers. As discussed in Chapter One, the genre of whaling literature for children was in serious decline by the 1960s, as changing attitudes and increased regulation resulted in the gradual decline of the industry. The majority of texts published since 2000 have been retellings of "Heroic Era" narratives, or penguin picturebooks. Neither of these genres offer readers the same insight into the significant industry which developed in the Antarctic, the lives of children who joined whaling crews, or the damage done to the Antarctic wildlife and environment by the industrialised whaling practices of the mid-twentieth-century. While the penguin picturebooks represent a shift in perspective, from ecophobic to ecophilic, they do not provide any historical context to explain that humans have already done significant damage in the Antarctic, and that human activity in the continent brought several species of whales and seals close to extinction. In addition, the

penguin picturebooks are aimed at a very young readership while texts for older readers generally take the form of "Heroic Era" literature or adventure literature, and the majority of these texts do not provide any historical information on the early exploitation of the landscape by human visitors or highlight an environmental message for child readers.

In addition to exploring dominant genres within the field, this thesis also interrogates enduring themes, tropes and narrative elements that exist across a variety of genres. A key focus in the thesis is the importance of time in Antarctic narratives and the interaction of time and space within Antarctic literature for children. In Chapter Two and Three, I explore the impact of the "Heroic Era", and specifically the fatal conclusion of Scott's *Terra Nova* expedition, on representations of time in Antarctic children's literature. In Chapter Two, I identify a chronotope, that I term the "Heroic Era" chronotope, that shapes several genres of literature for children about the Antarctic, specifically retellings of the "Heroic Era" narratives. This chronotope is characterised by its cyclicality, and the verticality of temporal relations which creates the continuous presence of the past within the Antarctic landscape in "Heroic Era" texts. The analysis of the "Heroic Era" chronotope within this thesis focuses specifically on the literature for children set in the Antarctic, and demonstrates how the events of the "Heroic Era" shape the representation of time within Antarctic fiction for children. A similar chronotopic analysis could be conducted on the adult literature written about the continent, to interrogate if, and how, wider cultural perceptions of the Antarctic continue to be defined by the early Antarctic expeditions.

Within Chapter Six, I identified the "brink-time" chronotope. This chronotope has the potential to be applied more broadly and could offer a mechanism for considering how authors writing about environmental issues and environmental disaster construct time, and how texts for children represent the present as a tipping-point, a key moment in the history of the world after which the world can either move towards environmental disaster or take steps

to undo years of man-made climate change. This chronotope facilitates the representation of young characters who have agency and the potential to make lasting change. Importantly, it is a chronotope that encourages child readers to understand their own agency, and their role in shaping the human relationship with our environment and the other animals who inhabit the earth. Chronotopic analysis, and specifically the interrogation of the use of brink-time within children's literature, could add to an ecopedagogical study of environmentally-engaged literature for children, and could facilitate an interrogation of how authors position child agency and responsibility regarding environmental issues within literature.

This thesis also expands considerably on the terminology first explored in Alice Curry's *Environmental Crisis in Young Adult Literature* (2013) and introduces the concept of "perceptual scaling" as a tool to analyse the varying perspectives used in landscape representations in children's literature. In a discussion of Philip Reeve's work, Curry explored how the author used expanded and contracted perspectives to represent the changing sense of "phenomenal belonging" (p.21). In Curry's text these terms are not fully defined or explored, in particular the contracted perspective is not examined in depth. I argue that an analysis of what I term "perceptual scaling" can provide a valuable methodology for interrogating the representation of landscape within children's literature, in particular in visual texts. Texts can be understood as existing within a range, moving between extreme expanded perspectives, for example 'God's eye view' or whole-earth images, to contracted perspectives such as those explored in Chapter Six. A perceptual scaling analysis could usefully be applied to interrogate how authors, or specific genres, imagine and represent landscape for child readers. Perceptual scaling analysis could be especially useful within an ecopedagogically-focused analysis of literature for children, to enable an examination of the relationships that authors depict between human or animal protagonists and their environments, and the impact these representations might have on the child reader. The use of whole-earth imagery, an example

of expanded perspectives, has been criticised by ecocritics including Curry and Greta Gaard as perpetuating "a sense of dislocation from humanity's material context" (Curry, 2013, p.19). This thesis argues that expanded perspectives can commonly be found within Antarctic literature for children, specifically within texts focusing on historical "Heroic Era" expeditions. These expanded perspectives may encourage an understanding of the Antarctic as an alien space. In contrast, the contracted perspectives within penguin picturebooks can be seen to foster a place-specific understanding of the Antarctic as a varied landscape which is a homeplace and home space for many Antarctic animals. The texts examined within Chapter Six demonstrate the radical potential of the use of contracted perspectives within an environment typically depicted as a wilderness and the wider potential of perceptual scaling analysis in relation to visual texts for children.

Further areas of study

This thesis demonstrates the volume and variety of British writing about the Antarctic for children. I concentrate on British literature, but there is a wide range of material about the Antarctic produced for child readers across the world. The specific focus on British literature was motivated by the prominent role that Britain has played in Antarctic history, as well as the importance of Antarctic exploration in British culture. In addition, the scope of this project and the large number of British Antarctic texts available prevented a broader multi-national analysis of representations of the Antarctic for children. There is considerable work still to be done relating to the depiction of the Antarctic for child readers across cultures. The thesis serves to open up the field of criticism regarding the representation of Antarctica in literature for children, and could facilitate further comparative analysis of depictions of the Antarctic in other national literatures. Many texts for children set in the Antarctic have been published in America. These include Lucy Jane Bledsoe's *Antarctic Scoop* (2003), Michael Chabon's *The*

Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay (2000), as well as exploration literature such as Robert Burleigh's 1998 *Black Whiteness: Admiral Byrd Alone in the Antarctic* and Paul Rink's *Admiral Richard Byrd: Alone in the Antarctic* (2007). There is scope for a comparative analysis of British and American exploration narratives, and the myths that have built up around prominent explorers. Many American texts retell the stories of Admiral Byrd's Antarctic expeditions which took place between 1928 and 1940, and involved an entirely different mode of travel – flight. Within Irish literature, too, there is a small but expanding body of literature on the Antarctic. These texts focus on the early expeditions of Shackleton in particular, due to his Irish heritage, and Tom Crean, an Irish sailor who appears as a peripheral figure in many of the "Heroic Era" expedition narratives, but who played key roles in both the *Terra Nova* and *Endurance* expeditions. Culturally specific ideas of wilderness within Ireland, and the position of Ireland as a spectator to, rather than participant in, the "Heroic Era" expeditions would provide a fascinating contrast with the British literature written about the continent. Texts such as *Shackleton: The Voyage of the James Caird* (2016) a graphic novel by David Butler and Gavin McCumiskey, which includes gruesome scenes of the explorers killing and eating the expedition dogs (pp. 37-40), demonstrate that "Heroic Era" myths may not be treated with the same level of reverence within other national contexts. There is also broad scope to look beyond these Western or English-speaking contexts to provide a more extensive account of the representation of the Antarctic within literature for children. Such an account could focus on the twelve signatory countries of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States and Russia (then the USSR). All of these countries have had a long history of engagement with the Antarctic and many retain significant territorial claims in the continent. As this thesis demonstrates, Antarctic literature

for children is a rich and diverse field, and there is much valuable work still to be done on how this continent is imagined for child readers.

Another area in which there is considerable scope for further research is the cultural history of whaling and the lives and experiences of child whalers in Antarctica. There is a paucity of material available about child whalers. Further studies could seek to uncover the experiences of children who took part in Antarctic whaling, and how these diverged from, or corresponded to, the fictional whaling stories examined in this thesis. Fiona Barnard, Acting Curator or Whitby Museum notes:

> Children routinely sailed on whaling ships as apprentices (sometimes called servants or boys) from about the age of 13. Appendix 2 of Tony Barrow's book *The Whaling Trade of North-East England, 1750-1850* University of Sunderland Press, 2001, contains muster rolls and crew lists of selected north-east whalers. The youngest crewman is 12 year old Thomas Rigby from North Shields on the *Lord Gambier* in 1841. (Barnard, pers. comm., April 8, 2016)

Museums such as Whitby and the Hull Maritime Museum contain archival records that could provide an insight into the lives of child whalers and offer a comparative resource against which to examine the fictional texts produced for child readers. In short, there is a wide range of material which has yet to receive significant critical attention within the broader field of Antarctic literature for children, and particularly within related fields such as whaling literature and literature of the sea. This thesis could act as a valuable resource, facilitating comparative analysis or providing a theoretical framework for the analysis of representations of the Antarctic and other wild landscapes for child and adult audiences.

Perhaps what this thesis reveals most consistently is the enduring fascination with the Antarctic. Despite the physical distance between Britain and the Antarctic, the continent retains an important place in British literature and culture. In July 2017, 160 years after

Charles Dickens published an article about a whale exhibition on the Mile End Road, a new whale exhibition was unveiled, at London's Natural History Museum (NHM). A blue whale named "Hope" has now taken pride of place at the central hall of the museum. In a BBC Horizons documentary directed by Annie Mackinder that followed the installation of the whale, Richard Sabin, Principle Curator for Mammals at the Natural History Museum, stated:

> The broader message is a conservation message: our species took blue whales to the edge of extinction and through our efforts we have managed to help it recover. It is a model in terms of the hope that we have got for the future. (Sabin as cited in Mackinder, 2017)

It was in the Antarctic that humans brought blue whales to the brink of extinction, and it was the dramatic decline in Antarctic whale populations that prompted the establishment of the International Whaling Commission and eventually the world-wide moratorium on whaling. This landscape has come to represent humanity's worst excesses and our wanton destruction of the natural world, as well as the best example of our ability to work collaboratively and to apply human ingenuity to help identify and prevent future environmental disaster. In the documentary, Sabin expresses a desire to teach new generations of British children about conservation. This desire is representative of the ecophilic perspective which has become prevalent within contemporary literature for children about the Antarctic. On the Natural History Museum's website for the exhibition on whales, which accompanied the launch of the new central exhibition, there is a gallery of six images; of these, five feature children ("Whales: Beneath the Surface", 2017). This is unsurprising because children are a key demographic for the NHM, but I believe that the focus on children is also connected to Sabin's desire to use this exhibition to help shape public opinion by focusing on young audiences, and to create positive change by reducing the human impact on the environment.

How we think about and understand places, landscapes, and environments inevitably shapes how we engage with these spaces. If we want the future of human engagement with the Antarctic to be one in which humans are a positive force in the environment, protecting rather than exploiting the animal inhabitants and the natural resources, then we need to interrogate how we represent this unique landscape for children. This thesis demonstrates the continuing interest in the Antarctic within children's literature, and indeed, the first two decades of the twenty-first century have seen a considerable increase in the numbers of Antarctic texts being published in Britain for child readers. It is vital that we continue to scrutinise how these texts represent the Antarctic for children; to interrogate ecophobic or ecophilic literary constructions of the Antarctic, and to analyse the kind of engagement that authors represent between their protagonists and the natural world. Ann Whiston Spirn argues that "Stories have consequences. If cities are seen as treasures of civilization, they will be made treasures through cultivation. If cities are seen as degraded, they will be made so through neglect" (Whiston Spirn, 1998, p.49). It is important that we analyse representations of wilderness landscapes like the Antarctic, not only because it provides a crucial insight into how we imagine our place in the world and ideas of home and otherness, but also because these representations have consequences for how wilderness landscapes are perceived, and whether they will be protected or degraded through human activity.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PRIMARY TEXT DATABASE

APPENDIX 2: *DISCOVERY* LIBRARY CATALOGUE

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEWS

A. INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE ALEXANDER
B. INTERVIEW WITH GERALDINE MCCAUGHREAN

Appendix 1: Database of Primary Texts for Children set in the Antarctic

Author	Title	Year	Original Pub. Date (if different)	City	Publisher
Goodrich, Samuel	Peter Parlay, Tales of the Sea and the Islands in the Pacific Ocean	1854	1841	London	W. Tegg & Co.
Coleridge, Samuel	Rime of the Ancient Mariner	1857	1798	New York	D. Appleton & Co.
Bullen, Frank	The Bitter South	1909		London	Robert Culley
Kennedy Maclean, J.	Heroes of the Polar Seas	1910		London	W & R Chambers
Payne, Warren G.	Three Boys in Antarctica	1912		London	Charles Kelly
Hodder Williams, J.E.	Like English Gentlemen	1913		London	Hodder & Stoughton
Mackie, John	The Great Antarctic	1913		London	Jarold & Sons
Ballantyne, R.M.	Fighting the Whales	1915		London	Blackie & Sons
Beck, Christopher	The People of the Chasm	1923		London	C. Arthur Pearson
Judd, Alfred	The Secret of the Snows	1925		London	Cassell & Co
Evans, Rear Admiral E.R.G.R.	The Mystery of the Polar Star	1930	1927	London	S.W. Patridge & Co.
Westerman, J.F.C.	The Antarctic Treasure	1932		Oxford	Oxford University Press
Villiers, Alan J.	Whalers of the Midnight Sun	1934		London	Geoffrey Bles
Lewis, Leonard	Epics of Empire	1936		London	Dean & Son
Broad, Lewis	Five Men Versus the Antarctic', in Epics of Empire	1936		London	Dean & Son

	(Leonard Lewis, Ed.)				
Catherall, Arthur	Vanished Whaler	1939		London	Thomas Nelson & Sons
Duff, Douglas	The Treasure of the Antarctic	1948		London	Blackie & Sons
Gurdon, Captain J.E.	The Secret of the South	1950		London	Frederick Warne & Co.
Mountevans, Admiral Lord E.	Man of the White South: The Story of Captain Scott	1958		London & Edinburgh	Thomas Nelson & Sons
Briggs, Philip	Man of Antarctica: The Story of Captain Scott	1959		London	Lutterworth Press
Crisp, Frank	The Ice Divers	1960		London	Hodder & Stoughton
Webster Smith, B.	Sir Ernest Shackleton	1960		London	Blackie & Son
Du Garde Peach, l.	Captain Scott	1963		London	Ladybird
Vance Marshall, James	My Boy John that Went to Sea	1966		London	Hodder & Stoughton
Davy Dickie, F.E.	Snow in Summer	1967		London	Oliver & Boyd
Brown, Michael & Briggs, Raymond	Shackleton's Epic Voyage	1969		London	Hamish Hamilton
Andrew, Margaret	Flight to Antarctica	1985		Cambridge	The Burlington Press
Cowcher, Helen	Antarctica	1990		London	Andre Deutsch
Sauvain, Philip	Robert Scott in the Antarctic	1993		Winchester	Zoe Books
McCurdy, Michael	Trapped in the Ice! Shackleton's Amazing Antarctic Adventure	1997		London & New York	Walker Books

Alexander, Caroline	Mrs Chippy's Last Expedition: The Remarkable Journal of Shackleton's Polar-bound cat	1998	1997	London	Bloomsbury
Jenkins, Martin & Chapman, Jane	The Emperor's Egg	1999		London & New York	Walker Books
Hooper, Meredith	Ice Trap! Shackleton's Incredible Expedition	2000		London	Hodder Children's Books
Marriott, Janice	Endurance: Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition	2000		London	Harper Collins
Butterworth, Christine	Shackleton the Survivor	2001		Oxford	Oxford University Press
Johns. W.E.	Biggles Breaks the Silence	2001	1949	Thirsk	House of Stratus
Mahy, Margaret	Riddle of the Frozen Phantom	2001		London	Harper Collins
Dowswell, Paul	True Polar Adventures	2002		London	Usborne
Green, Jen	Avoid Joining Shackleton's Polar Expedition	2002		Brighton	Book House
Hooper, Meredith	Race to the Pole	2002		London	Frances Lincoln
Charley, Catherine	Robert Scott and Roald Amundsen Raced to the South Pole	2003		London	Scholastic
Mercurio, Jed	The Penguin Expedition	2003		London & New York	Walker Books
Smith, Michael	Tom Crean: Ice Man	2003		Cork	The Collins Press
McCaughrean, Geraldine	The White Darkness	2005		Oxford	Oxford University Press

Middleton, Haydn	Great Ice Race	2005		Oxford	Harcourt Education
Mortimer, Gavin	The Voyage of Shackleton's Endurance	2008		West Sussex	Tony Potter Publishing
Wilson, Karma & Chapman, Jane	Where is Home, Little Pip?	2008		London & New York	Simon & Schuster
Markle, Sandra	Animals Robert Scott Saw	2008		San Francisco	Chronicle Books
Wilson, Karma & Chapman, Jane	Don't Be Afraid, Little Pip	2009		London & New York	Simon & Schuster
Horáček, Petr	The Lonely Penguin	2011		London	Collins Big Cat
Curtis, Anne	Thin Ice	2012		London	Harper Collins
Gould, Mike	Race to the Pole	2012		London	Harper Collins
Wilson, Karma & Chapman, Jane	What's in the Egg, Little Pip?	2012		London & New York	Simon & Schuster
Dowdeswell, E., Dowdeswell, J., & Seddon, A.	Scott of the Antarctic	2012		London	Raintree
Grill, William	Shackleton's Journey	2014		London	Flying Eye Books
Ganeri, Anita	Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Antarctic Expedition	2015		London	Wayland Publishing
Horáček, Petr	Blue Penguin	2015		London & New York	Walker Books
Willis, Jeanne & Jarvis	Poles Apart	2015		London	Nosy Crow
Dowdeswell, E., Dowdeswell, J., & Seddon, A.	Ernest Shackleton: Antarctic Explorer	2015		London	Raintree
Butler, David & McCumiskey, Gavin	Shackleton: The Voyage of the James Caird	2016		Cork	The Collins Press

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NATIONAL

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List of Cabins and of Pressmarks.

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Dr. Koettlitz	G.
Mr. Hodgson	H.
Dr. Wilson	J.
Lieutenant Royds, R.N.	K.
Lieutenant Barne, R.N.	L.
Lieutenant Shackleton, R.N.R.	M.
Mr. Murray, F.R.S.	N.
Mess Deck	O.
Mr. Ferrar	P.
Ward Room	W.

LIST OF BOOKS.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

Title.	Author.	Press-mark.
Francis Bacon	Lord Macaulay . .	W.
L. R. Koolemans Beynen . .	Charles Boissevain . .	J.
Isaac Bickerstaff . . .	Steele	W.
Prince Bismarck . . .	Charles Lowe . . .	J.
Charlotte Brontë . . .	Mrs. Gaskell . . .	O.
Burleigh, John Hampden, and Horace Walpole.	Lord Macaulay . .	W.
History of Caliph Vathek . .	W. Beckford . . .	W.
Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde .	A. Forbes . . .	E.
Miguel de Cervantes . . .	H. E. Watts . . .	L.
Earl of Chatham . . .	Lord Macaulay . .	W.
Lord Clive	C. Wilson . . .	E.
Christopher Columbus . .	Sir Clements R. Markham	J.
Captain Cook	Walter Besant . . .	E.
Sir Roger de Coverley . .	R. Steele and J. Addison .	W.
Oliver Cromwell . . .	Frederic Harrison . .	J.
William Dampier . . .	W. Clark Russell . .	J.
Two Years Before the Mast .	R. H. Dana . . .	O.
Charles Darwin	Francis Darwin . .	L.
John Davis, the Navigator . .	Sir Clements R. Markham	L.
Sir Francis Drake . . .	Julian Corbett . . .	E.
Dundonald	Hon. J. W. Fortescue .	J.
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Queen Elizabeth . . .	E. S. Beesley . . .	J.
Emin Pasha . . (2 vols.)	George Schweitzer . .	E.
Michael Faraday . . .	Walter Jerrold . . .	O.
Benjamin Franklin . . .	(Autobiography) . .	W.
Sir John Franklin . . .	Captain A. H. Markham .	J.
Frederick the Great . (9 vols.)	Thomas Carlyle . .	E.
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Goethe	G. H. Lewes . . .	E.

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Charles George Gordon . .	Sir William F. Butler .	E.
Warren Hastings . . .	Sir Alfred Lyall . .	J.
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Henry the Fifth	A. J. Church . . .	L.
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David Livingstone . . .	Thomas Hughes . .	J.
Ditto (Personal Life) . .	W. G. Blaikie . .	L.
Lumsden of the Guides . .	P. S. Lumsden, and G. R. Elmslie.	J.
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Appendix 3a: Transcript of Telephone Interview with Caroline Alexander

Interview date: Saturday 16th January 2016

SM: In a lot of the stories that retell the stories of Scott or Shackleton there is a very familiar format. They often tell the story just from the perspective of Scott or Shackleton but what I thought was interesting in Mrs Chippy is that we get very different perspectives and Shackleton isn't really in the centre of the frame at all. Is this something that you were intentionally trying to do with this book:

CA: You know there was very little that was intentional, this was a very instinctive book and I am a cat person obviously, my family are cat people and I had just discovered Shackleton and was mesmerised by the story, but actually I thought to myself this has been written. This is not something I am going to do anything with, you know he has his own memoir, Worsley has written his memoir, Alfred Lansing wrote *Endurance*, this is not for me. It was just a playful idea and I joked about it with my family but then I thought "why not?". I worked through the diaries, the other men's diaries and I had the cat's point of view in mind. And it is because cats are so much in the centre-frame of their own lives, it's their movie so to speak. Once you adopted the cat as the narrator there was no way that they would be anything other than a cat-centric point of view. A dog's perspective might be more sympathetic to what the humans were doing. So, it wasn't calculated as such, it was a playful instinct, except that it is a very poignant story. So, at the end as I was coming to the end that was the part that got a bit stickier. I actually had my editor in America call me and say, "my wife is very upset with the way you end it, isn't there a way for Mrs Chippy to survive?" and that was the only part that I calculated. I had to say now am I going to take it in this way or in another way. I decided that part of the memorialisation process, if you will, was that Mrs Chippy was not going to survive. But other than that, it was just a whimsical enterprise that rolled along without much thought, mostly taking its cues point by point from what happened in the diaries day by day. The fact that cat's just have this enormous self-importance meant that if you were going to be faithful to that this was going to be all about Mrs Chippy and the other characters were going to be out of range, seen in oblique angles, depending on when Mrs Chippy might encounter them.

SM: I thought this was also a lovely way to look again at McNish, because he is very unsympathetically treated in some of the retellings, and I thought by having his close relationship with Mrs Chippy we get a completely different view of McNish.

CA: You know if I believed in such things as divine destiny I would say that the reason that I was compelled to write Mrs Chippy was to resurrect the memory of McNish. I more or less invented the relationship between the two. We obviously knew that the carpenter had a cat, the cat accompanied him, there had to be something in that. On the other hand, it was unclear how he really felt about his cat because there were ship's cats all the time and they were not always much-loved pets. So, it was a fiction of mine that they had this close companionship. So, I wrote the book and it had just come out and I had moved on and been asked to do an exhibition of the photographs, a very big exhibition in New York City and I was calling around to anybody who survived who might have artefacts that we could include in the exhibit.

I called the keeper of the Antarctic Museum in Wellington New Zealand, a man named Baden Norris, the rather elderly curator there. I asked him, "do you have any artefacts?" and he said, "yes we do" and we were talking and he said, "you know I knew McNish," and I said, "oh gosh" and he said, "you know he ended up down on his luck on the docks down here". I knew that he had lived in New Zealand and died there and I was very sad to hear this. He said, "you know he was a very bitter man at the end of his life" and we were speaking long-distance on the telephone, and I asked him "is this because Shackleton denied him the polar medal?" and he said, "no, no, no; it was because Shackleton killed his cat." And I just went cold because he had no idea that I had been on this quest or anything. And I told him what I had done, and he said, "let me write you what I remember," and he wrote me a letter and he said he had been taken as a boy by his father to visit McNish who was by then in an old folk's hospice, at the end of his life. He said he was renowned on the docks, much respected for the *James Caird*, but he said the running joke on the docks was that whatever the topic of conversation he would always bring up Mrs Chippy, and he did and I always remembered it.

So, it seemed it really was true that he had taken this little companion and the companion had been sacrificed on the ice by Shackleton and he had never really forgiven him. I think that part of that stalking on the ice, when they are marching to land and there is this mutinous episode where McNish refuses to go and Shackleton came running back and apparently threatens him, I think that it had a lot to do with the fact that Mrs Chippy had been killed and he didn't want to go on.

SM: We read so many depictions of Shackleton the amazing kind leader but having the grim story of Mrs Chippy, and the dogs too, does bring back some of the stark choices he made and offers a much more brutal image of Shackleton than we commonly associate with the explorer.

CA: And one has to wonder also, the truth is Shackleton survives and his grand plan works so one doesn't go back and second guess his point by point decisions because his grand plan succeeds so it seems a bit cynical to go back and look at the things he could have done better. But one of the things that, in retrospect, one has to wonder is, was this psychologically wise? Knowing the emotional investment that the men had in the animals, was this the right time to do it? Especially with the loss of the ship. On the other hand, maybe he thought that it was better to do it then before the men got even more attached to the animals. But I agree with you it's an extraordinarily brutal act that at that particular point didn't seem to advance anything in particular.

SM: The end of your text could be seen as ambiguous. It doesn't directly show what happens to Mrs chippy. So, is the ending, the death of Mrs Chippy at the hands of Shackleton, is this something you hoped that the child reader would seek out after reading your book?

CA: That's a good question, because of the fact that I travelled blind when I did the book, and the moment where I stopped galloping along instinctively and had to calculate and say, "ok how am I going to end this" was precisely the ending. Firstly, I've always felt that although this was a children's book, I place it in that genre of what I call a grown-up children's book too. I am always amused at when I have done book readings to see who turns up with what. Sometimes people will bring books that unrelated what you are talking about. I think there is first of all a certain archness in it that I think I like to thin would appeal to grown-ups, grown-ups either

reading the book to children, or reading it as part of a Shackleton binge. But not wholly children, if that makes sense.

The first time that I had to test run this for an audience of children was when I gave a lecture accompanying the exhibition at the Museum of Natural History in New York for children. It was sort of about cats, […] and I came to Mrs Chippy and that's of course where I give the most information. There was this solemn little audience at the end when it came to questions. And I had shown some film clips that showed the *Endurance* being crushed and the mast coming down. One of the questions was, "was that for real, was that really what happened?" I said, "yes that was, that was real photography of the time." Then the next question was, I said "Mrs Chippy had been put asleep," that's how I put it in the lecture, so the next question was: "if Mrs Chippy hadn't been put to sleep would he still be alive today?" All these little eyes were looking at me and I said, "well people live a lot longer than animals, so the answer is no, and the good thing is that Mrs Chippy didn't have to suffer what the men suffered on the ice."

SM: I think it's kind of a wonderful ending though, because you don't force upon the child reader the knowledge that Mrs Chippy was shot by one of the people who had been taking care of him. But at the same time there is an open-endedness that encourages them if they do want to learn more.

CA: I certainly hoped it would be open-ended. I hoped it wouldn't betray the hard facts. I hoped I wasn't pandering to sentiment. I hoped that it had some tone that allowed people to instinctively understand that something happened without knowing the particulars. But I have never been able to quite calibrate myself because of the kinds of responses I have had.

SM: It is one of the most engaging elements of the story and one of the hardest. And it changes how you see all of the individuals in the story. How they are able to both take comfort in and take care of Mrs Chippy and at the same time they understand when the time comes that his death was inevitable in that situation. I was actually reading your texts for adult as well, *The Endurance*, and some of the quotes from the people who had to do the job themselves were very heart-breaking.

CA: Oh yes. This is why I come back to the psychological element. Shackleton who was so psychological in his man-management, it in retrospect seems like a bit of a blunder. And it is difficult or impossible to second-guess a successful survival story, you know the success is that they all survive. But it does make me wonder how shattering that must have been, on top of losing the ship. I almost think it would have been good for morale to have the dogs out leading the way across the ice, and everyone all sticking together.

SM: Did you read these "Heroic-Era" stories of Scott and Shackleton when you were a child, or is this something that you came across more as an adult reader?

CA: I knew of Scott without particularly reading about him. My parents are English and I don't anybody of that generation grew up without knowing about him. He was not a hero, in fact my mother thought he was a damn fool, but I knew the story in outline. I certainly read voyages of discovery and exploration and I loved fictive stories about that kind of thing – I read Ryder Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and I loved *Swallows and Amazons.* There was an American series by Willard Price who was a writer for National Geographic magazine and wrote a series of stories adventure stories because they were very detailed, they were very informed.

One thing that I loved, was a comic called Play Hour. Every week it was sent out and it would have pictures of children and they were from all over the Empire, or post-Empire. It would be so-and-so in Malaya, or so-and-so in African. In the centre of it, in glorious colour was something called The Adventures of Gulliver Guinea Pig, and these were very well drawn, very good stories that took you to some corner of the world, so you would go down the amazon, or you would go to the south pole, and it was all The Adventures of Gulliver Guinea Pig, and I really feel that having read that kind of thing aged 5,6,7, they are the earliest kind of travelling and adventure stories that I remember.

SM: Was there a reason that you chose the front image for the book. It features two individuals who weren't really meant to be there, the stowaway and the cat, together?

CA: I think it is fair to say that it was that picture that drew me into Mrs Chippy, more than any words which are quoted from the diaries. As you probably know we

have some actual descriptions of Mrs Chippy. Mrs Chippy did actually jump overboard on the way to Buenos Aires and was picked up by the men in the ocean, which is unbelievable. He really did walk over the roofs of the dogs and make them bark. These are the descriptions, the eyewitness accounts that were written in the other memoirs of the men, but the picture just riveted me.

Part of it is the total self-assurance of this cat, that looks out at you with the level gaze of a full member of the crew. And clearly doesn't see himself as a part but as a comrade, as part of the company. So again, having cats, I have seen that look of total self-possession. I chose it because I think it is such an arresting picture. It is the personality that one sees I think. It is not just a cute little cat but something with a whole interior world behind those eyes.

SM: This is obviously a story that is presented for children. I was wondering do you think these stories have relevance for children today.

CA: Oh, completely I really, really, do. I find that the earnest careful gender ethnic coding to ensure that you only read what is relevant to you is the most patronising stultifying approach that could be given to a child starting off on an imaginative life. I look at all of the things I respond to and none of them were appropriate to who I was, as a little girl. There was no reason that I would have been connecting with travels down the amazon or anything like that. If somebody were to have dutifully given me the list of books that I should respond to none of the things I like would have been in it.

There was a series of autobiographies written by Maya Angelou, who was a remarkable woman who grew up in the rural south who did just about everything. She wrote an autobiography called *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, which was about how she and her brother were taken under the wing of this old southern black school teacher who had them read Dickens and Tolstoy and she describes the oy of being Natasha at the Ball, and these transporting connections that she made, that were utterly inappropriate to her circumstances. That, really, was her great strength; the strength of her imagination.

I think that anything that takes imagination out into the world, into the far away, anything that is beyond the bunker of their [the child reader] own existence, that

makes them look out of the parapet of their own existence is in some way liberating. It is, at least, good to imaginatively roam a little farther afield. The fact that books are targeted in one way or another means nothing. So, I very much think these stories are meaningful in the best sense, in terms of life development and imaginative development.

SM: Did you feel that you had more or less freedom writing this story for children?

CA: I didn't really look out at the audience until the book was out and I had to confront real children. But I think that it was very liberating, it was a lot of fun. I like facts, I like true stories. Therefore, I liked the idea of this story being grounded in facts. And, indeed, if you get all of the diaries that record the expedition and plonk *Mrs Chippy* right in the middle, *Mrs Chippy* is absolutely faithful to what was happening on any given day down to the weather. I liked that and it wasn't confining; it gave me the outline of a trail to follow.

I think the *Endurance* book I wrote which is only factual is also read by older children, so the story is very accessible story for a very wide range of ages, in whatever format it is told. But certainly, the strictly factual adult version was much more demanding than the freedom I had to riff off the facts with *Mrs Chippy*.

SM: There is a very playful tone to it, especially in the very heavily notated sections. It is very reminiscent of the other accounts that we get of the "Heroic-Era" expeditions, but it is wonderfully undermining those accounts.

CA: I liked the idea that the cat could deflate, could take some of the pomposity out of it. As you may know the introduction to Shackleton's South was first written by Lord Hunt of the Royal Geographical Society, which is why I have Lord Mouser-Hunt, but I feel that the introduction achieves the tone of utter pomposity that some of the others do. I enjoyed playing with the genre.

SM: When I saw the title I immediately thought of *Scott's Last Expedition*, I was wondering if that was intentional?

CA: I felt it should draw this connection, and I liked coming at an oblique angle, as if the reader should know, somehow who Mrs Chippy was beyond this last

expedition. I found it mischievous but also tantalising. You know, what did Mrs Chippy do before this last expedition? But yes, that was very much part of making it sit within the established genre. From the title, to the footnotes to the introduction, to the whole straight-faced introduction.

SM: Having Mrs Chippy there allows us to see a much more unexpected side of the explorers. The boat journey of Shackleton's expedition is sometimes done away with as a preliminary to the real action, which is one the ship sunk, whereas this story is so located within that journey and that period of waiting and uncertainty. I think it really gave life to this element of the story which is often as the boring part before the story really starts.

CA: I completely agree, and you know what I found was that *Mrs Chippy* was what I wrote first, and in the course of doing that I came back from the Royal Geographical Society. I wrote this essentially for private fun, but then I gave it to my agent who was amused by it, he's not a cat person but he said, "let me see what I can do with it." So, he took it to the Frankfurt book fair, and he was sitting at a restaurant when Larry Ashmead from Harper Collins sauntered by and greeted my agent. My agent said: "Well Larry what are you down here for?", and Larry said, "doing what I always do, looking for the next great cat story." So, my agent handed the script to him and it became published.

So, once it became a book I thought, now I've read all these diaries, let me see what I can do to illustrate this book. So, I went through the sketches that were done by one of the sailors, and pictures. But in doing that I discovered that there was this unpublished, disorganised, badly filed collection of photographs at the Royal Geographical Society.

I came back and got that together into an exhibit, which took some time. But then at short notice the museum said to me, we have to have a publication to accompany the exhibit, we always do. And they needed it in something like 5 months. And I sort of hit the ground running, but what unfolded was the book the *Endurance*, the grown-up book if you like, the factual book. But because I had paid such close obsessive attention to the period on the ice, I felt I had all the men under my belt. I knew who they were, I knew their personalities, I knew everything that I would never have learnt had I not paid attention to the period on the ice.

If someone had said to me, cold, "we want you to write this grand survival story," I would have done exactly what you just said; which is to ignore or race through this boring, domestic set up, just the set up to the grand adventure, and go straight to the boat journey and all of that. But the human part of the story where you know the men, happens during those long months where they are trapped in the ice and they don't know what's going to happen, they're still hopeful. It's much more interesting in human terms I think.

SM: I never realised that it was Mrs Chippy that stimulated the exhibition in New York. Stephanie Barczewski argues that it was that exhibition that has helped to reinvigorate interest in Shackleton and make sure that he didn't languish in obscurity as he had. So, in a way Mrs Chippy saved Shackleton's reputation.

CA: Oh absolutely, and you may have seen that the book is dedicated to Mrs Chippy and when I went to write this book, when I got the demand that you suddenly have to write this book in short order, I started calling around people. Hitherto I had worked from known archive sources, and now I had to dig a little deeper.

I got names out of telephone directories, the Blackborow family, the McNish family. I would introduce myself and I would hear a polite silence and I would say "I'm doing this exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History in New York" and then I would say, "I have actually written on this before I wrote a book called *Mrs Chippy*," and they'd say: "*Mrs Chippy*, why didn't you say you wrote *Mrs Chippy*, of course you can…" So, *Mrs Chippy* passed me through many gates, I'd say four key gates I got through because of that book.

There is an American connection to McNish. The woman he writes about in his diary, "my loved one Nancy", either she came to Vermont, or her daughter came to Vermont, so there turned out to be a minor American thread. That American thread led me to some pictures of McNish, and more about his life in Scotland. In particular, I learnt about the house he had been living in, in Scotland, when he left to go to the Antarctic, (I have a little watercolour of the house). The house was called mole-catcher's cottage. *Mrs Chippy* paved the way for everything else, and the more I found out seemed to confirm the reality of who Mrs Chippy really was. Really if I had not done *Mrs Chippy* none of the rest of it would have happened.

SM: There are these few snippets of the story that come to represent the whole story. Lots of children's stories take these snippets and put them together into a story and what you miss is some of the nuance, that I think is so easily available in *Mrs Chippy* when you get to see the different relationships and the different decisions.

CA: One of the big glaring errors was that one of the things McNish made himself unpopular with Shackleton for doing was for saying that he could build a slip from the wreckage of the *Endurance*. We know enough about his abilities afterwards to know that this was probably true, there was a lot of timber lying around. He could have done it. It was in the after the fact discussion that this possibility was aired more directly and you realise, of course, McNish could have done that, the sailors knew he could have done that and there is Shackleton advocating that they march 300 miles over impossible landscape dragging everything with them. Why not just build a new boat?

SM: This doesn't appear really at all in other retellings. The ship is gone, but the idea that they could have done this is so incredible.

CA: It's a remarkable story, and as I say, once you pull something like that off, it is hard to double back and start poking holes in it in that way.

SM: The thin line between dying and living, for Scott and Shackleton, and the difference that makes to your enduring legacy is incredible. Particularly now we are so invested in these stories of survival against all the odds.

CA: It is interesting even looking at all the stories that are up for nomination this year: there's *The Martian* (2015), which is about survival, there's *The Revenant* (2015), which is about survival. They are about one-man survival stories in each case.

I think the one gift that Shackleton had though, Shackleton said something that stayed with me, he said "Optimism is true moral courage." That I have to say distinguishes him very sharply from Scott. When you look back at the moment where Scott knows that he has been beaten to the pole, and he sees the Norwegian tracks, the whole tone of his diary changes. It is the "Good God this is an awful place" you just feel his spirit go into his boots. And I think that is where the two men

differ most sharply. I truly believe that had Shackleton found Norwegian tracks he would have given a "well boys we gave it our best, let's see if we can't beat the beggars back to the ship and break the news." I think if he had met Amundsen on the way back they would have had a comradely toast. He had an ability to jettison old plans and move on to the new, and I think that is what made him seem ruthless. In his time a lot of people didn't like him because he seemed single minded and ruthless and all those things. But it is a great capacity for pressing forward, that you don't carry that baggage.

Whereas, Scott could not. I believe Scott led his men to their deaths. It was not necessary what happened, and I think if he had more optimism he might have pulled it off.

SM: Shackleton does come across as quite a likeable character and the quote to his wife about "better a live donkey than a dead lion" you just think, well yes, that's true.

CA: Exactly, he could live with that. It would have been disappointing but he could live with that. There is a fascinating moment in the Ross Sea Diaries where he has to go back and face the music, the thrill of survival is gone the imperative of survival is gone. It is now dealing with unpaid bills and the British government and who is in charge of what and territorial issues as to who is in command.

He goes around to collect the Ross Sea Party and they have been writing their own desultory diaries. This is the group who have been on the ship that has been drifting around and everything else. When Shackleton enters the frame of vision it is like a light switch goes on. They say things like "the boss has had us in stitches with his stories." His mismanagement was the cause of all their suffering but this charisma he has and his ability to invest himself in the morale building is his great gift and you can see that for them already, without even knowing the whole drama of the Endurance expedition, he is vindicated, he is the hero, he is their hero, he is the sun who has come up and risen on their dull day and now everything looks possible.

That ability to make things seem possible is a very remarkable gift and I think you have to have a bit of the blarney in your perhaps to do that. To fool yourself, to spin stories that are not really true, but every day he weaved a narrative for them about

what could happen and then he somehow made it happen. To my knowledge no one has taught a leadership class that put them [Scott and Shackleton] up side by side but that would be a fascinating lesson.

Appendix 3b: Interview with Geraldine McCaughrean

Interview date: Saturday 16th January 2016

SM: What drew you to writing about the Antarctic?

GM: I didn't set out to write about Antarctica at all. The book title on the contract is actually "Walking over the Sea" and dates from when the premise of the story was a girl and her uncle walking over the frozen Bering Strait between continents… as people do whenever the Strait freezes. I had the vague notion of the uncle's incompetence and the girl being obliged to think more quickly and sensibly than he. But I found I didn't have a proper story – a cumulative momentum towards disaster – just that ever-present dread of being an inch or two away from plunging into icy Death. That wasn't going to sustain a novel.

Then, like Sym, I watched *The Last Place on Earth*. I had recently become acquainted with the actor Richard Morant (to whom the book is dedicated), who played Titus Oates in the above: that's why I was watching it. L P on E was probably the best thing he ever did.

So, I switched Poles – Antarctic instead of Arctic. And suddenly there he was – Titus, the 3rd party who would lend a third dimension to a two-dimensional book. Shackleton and companion, walking across South Georgia to find help, had the sense of a Third Person walking with them – a common experience on near-fatal hikes apparently. I suspect this fact fed into my 'is-he-real-or-isn't-he' Oates at the climax of the book. Mind you, by that stage, I was so deep inside the action that I was no longer making conscious use of material.

SM: Do you think of Antarctica as a wilderness?

GM: I think of Antarctica as a super-villain – at least I came to as I wrote. It seems to want to kill everything as quickly and painfully as possible. It's heart is devoid of life and therefore ravenous for the death of others. It is the nemesis of Life itself… even though the waters round about it teem with life. It denies the existence of colour – colour is glaringly, unbearably bright to those returning from there. It pulls such optical tricks as to hoodwink the five senses, lure people to their death or

blind them tortologically with white darkness. I never visited there and by the time I had done my research, I had no wish to.

SM: There are lots of references in The White Darkness to the wild speculation about Antarctica that existed before land-based exploration on the continent, such as Symmes' theory of polar portals to hidden worlds. Do you think that some people, authors and explorers included, are more interested in Antarctica as a blank page, or something you can project your ideas onto rather than as an actual landscape?

GM: I'm sure authors universally think of Antarctica as white paper begging the pen-nib to write on it. Jenny Diski's character in Skating to Antarctica never even gets off the boat when she gets there! (That made me so mad.) I think explorers are masochists who feel the need to pit themselves against ever more ferocious challenges until ultimately they end up on The Ice. Two entirely different things.

SM: Did you read the Heroic-Era stories of Scott and Shackleton when you were a child? If so do you remember any books in particular that you read? Or what do you remember about those stories?

GM: No. I seem always to have known the story of Scott and Oates, but I didn't avidly read Antarctic lit as a child – only when I got to *White Darkness*.

Scott and Oates (as I discovered after W.D. was published) take a particularly tight hold on the imaginations of authors. Their deaths stand hairs on end. I love the reason Francis Spufford points to for our huge obsession with Scott's Expedition. (roughly) "He takes us all the way to Death and only we make the return journey."

Oates on the way back found his little white pipe lying where he had dropped it… and yet his body was never found. So… Mystery. Sang froid. Suffering. Sacrifice. It's got everything. Even the carnage and heroics of the First World War did nothing to diminish the fascination a handful of foolhardy explorers exerted on the national imagination. I sometimes find myself wondering whether, as they lay dying in the mud of Flanders or suchlike, the members of the Scott expedition who died in the trenches wished they had died in Antarctica instead and at least won the adulation of all Britain by it.

SM: What relevance do you think these stories have for children today?

GM: I don't see why children today wouldn't respond to Shackleton and Scott with the same awe as the three generations before them… unless, given the modern ethos of self-entitlement, they can no longer comprehend "what was in it for those idiots that they put themselves to all that trouble".

SM: Your portrayal of Oates seemed to me to be wonderfully human, to be able to move beyond the one quote that he is always remembered for. What drew you to Oates as a character?

GM: The more I read about him, the better he got – his life was really interesting! He was a looney and a hero and had done all kind of ridiculous, adventurous, heroic things in hot, sunny places, before signing up to the Antarctic. A school teacher remembered him as like a big, daft, puppy. Also, he didn't chat much and he didn't marry – wonderfully useful when you want to put hidden wisdoms in a character's head and use him for love interest. (In truth, I think he was actually not very bright and inclined to sulking, but we pick, we choose, we edit….That's fiction for you.)

It helped that I was accidentally a little in love with Richard Morant… though of course I would never have dreamt of mentioning it over our polite lunch meetings. Not the British thing to do at all.

There is another function that Oates fulfilled and it's probably why he 'happened to me' just when he did. Once I had lit on the interior-hero idea, I suddenly knew what the book was going to be 'about'. (I don't like books to be wilfully about anything, but some kind of worthwhile drift usually emerges by accident.) I would never have thought of writing a book about what a miserable time my teenage years were: green and ignorant and sure everyone else knew more than I did, I was perpetually in love with the unattainable or imaginary and spent a lot of time fantasizing.) But the world has moved on, I thought. Teenagers know everything now – revoltingly everything and more than their parents ever did. But seeing my daughter reach teenage years and find them exactly the same as I had, for all the same reasons, I realised that I could create a plausible Sym and still find readers who could identify with her. So maybe Titus is the mother in me, giving the advice, to readers like my daughter, that I wish someone had given to my teenage self.

I was certainly commending the use of the imagination as the tortuga carapace that can shield you from a lot of pain as you forge forward, terrified, to do battle with the teenage years.

SM: Do you think of Scott and his fellow explorers as heroes?

GM: Historically I preferred Shackleton to Scott (despite Shackleton drowning the carpenter's dog) because he knew what he was doing, and Scott seems such a rank amateur who made perversely bad decision throughout. After L. P. on E., I was firmly anti-Scott himself, but that may be the slant the programme put on him, and one probably shouldn't believe TV series in preference to non-fiction.

SM: I think that Sym is a very exciting and subversive figure in this text, particularly given how masculine the Antarctic is as a landscape. Was Sym intended to be a subversive figure?

GM: Sym is only subversive in that she is intended to overturn the convictions of teenage girls that Love is inextricably bound up with the sex act and that you can't get one without submitting to the other.

I suppose I did want female intelligence and rationality to come out of it looking cool, too. Sym saves her own skin thanks to her own knowledge and strategies. For all I put in exploding aeroplanes, crevasse falls and suchlike action-movie stuff, this was always going to be primarily a thinking-girl's book really.

SM: This text seems to challenge some of the central elements of the story of the *Terra Nova* expedition, particularly in the depiction of Oates being helped out of the tent as he limped out into the blizzard. Do you think we need to re-evaluate some of the narratives that we have inherited and continue to retell about the 'Heroic Era' explorers?

GM: It is Ranulph Fiennes' belief that Oates could not have untied the tent flaps with both hands lost to frostbite. He convinced me, so I went along with his view. Anyway, I like the humanity it lends the other people in the tent. Otherwise, there would have been enough sang froid in there to cause frostbite!

I was well into the book before I came across the fact that Antarctica is being continually eroded from below and renewed from above, so that Oates' body must

have travelled downward through The Ice. It struck me as forcefully as it strikes Sym in the book – this one vital thing I had failed to pick up on despite all my research. How could I not have known that? And why had my eyes happened to light on it now? Uncanny. I think it leant a certain emotional power to the climax of the book. I love it when a book takes its author by surprise!

In answer to your second sentence: not so much as we need to re-evaluate other Heroic stories. The heroes of Victorian and Edwardian days are mostly soldiers holding their ground to the last man, storming gun emplacements, fighting off the Huns/Mahdi/ Zulus/ Boers… I feel much more wholehearted about glorifying explorers to young people than making war look shiny and thrilling and the epitome of machismo. Explorers epitomise a lot of virtues well worth perpetuating.

SM: The Antarctic in this novel is a very malleable, and dynamic place, I'm thinking particularly of the description of Oates's body being slowly ejected from the landscape and into the surrounding sea. Do you see the Antarctic as a dynamic space?

GM: It certainly is malleable! I took some dreadful liberties with geography – inventing places and shrinking distances by hundreds of miles. (Not the first of my topographical crimes in print.) The way I see it is, Antarctophiles will get such great pleasure from spotting all my errors; and those who don't spot them will simply enjoy the story. So no one suffers, do they?